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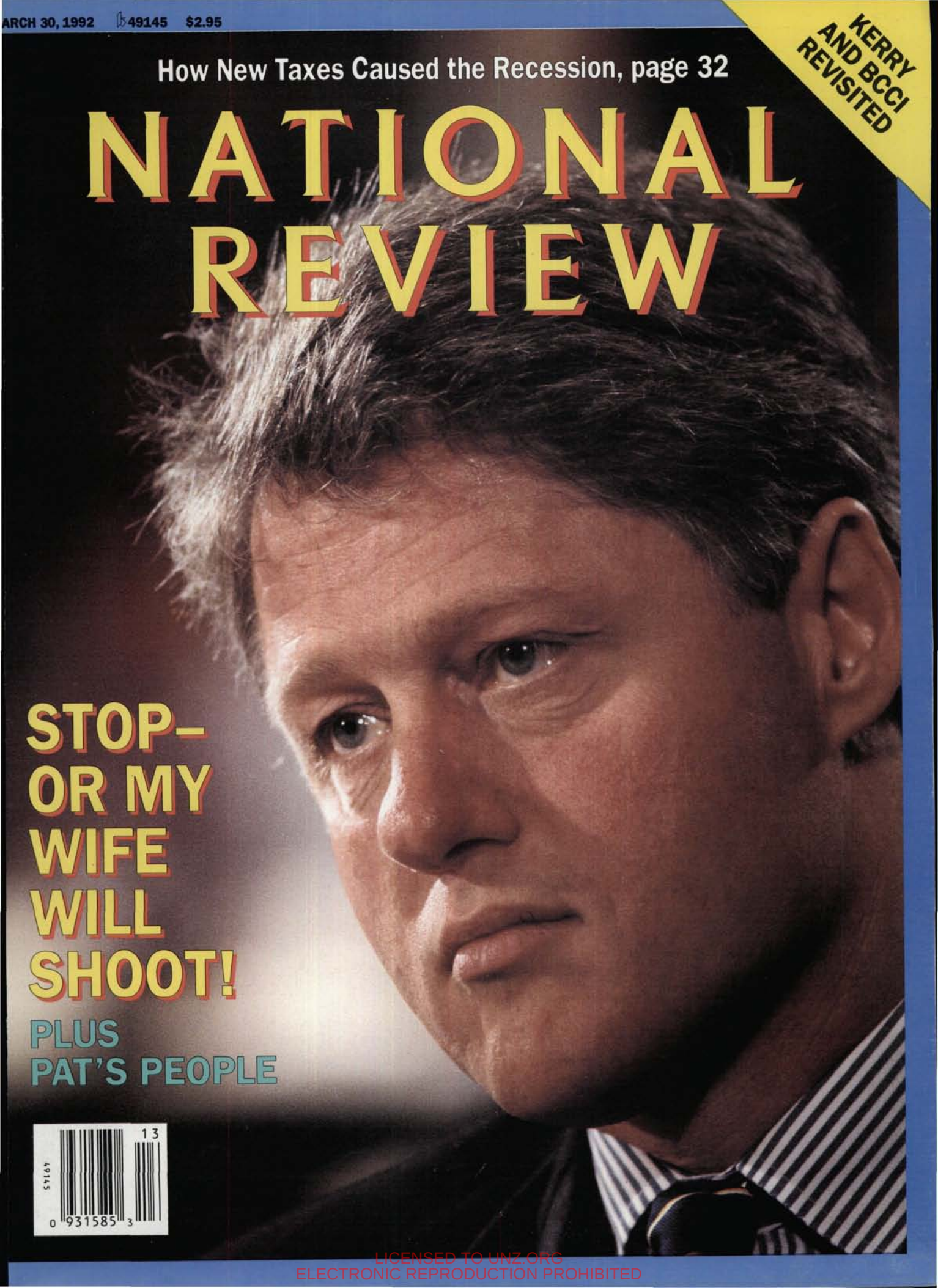
How New Taxes Caused the Recession, page 32

KERRY AND BCCI REVISITED

NATIONAL REVIEW



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NATIONAL REVIEW

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LETTERS

Just Win

Regarding Tom Bethell's article, "The Case for Buchanan" [March 2], allow me a few observations. First, Mr. Bethell's central premise, that "The case *for* Buchanan depends on the case *against* Bush," is faulty. It should instead read, "The case *for* Bush depends on the case *against* the Democrats." In other words, who is the best bet to whip the pants off whichever liberal the Democrats nominate, who are, after all, the real enemy? The answer is easy: George Bush. As Matthew might have put it, "For what is a movement profited, if it shall gain the nomination, but lose the general?"

Second, Bethell's assertion that "Ronald Reagan didn't attract conservative opposition" was enough to make me laugh. True, nobody challenged Reagan in the 1984 primary, but had there been one in 1986 I'm not so sure. For example, one of the conservatives quoted in Bethell's article actually called Reagan a "useful idiot" for signing the INF treaty with the Soviets.

Third, during the Arabian Gulf crisis, President Bush did not "subordinat[e] U.S. foreign policy to the UN Security Council." It was the other way around.

Fourth, I take exception to Bethell's comments that some conservatives are "all too willing to settle for big government as long as the liberals allow them to use part of it to sustain an American Empire. Buchanan prefers strategic defense to the global invasion force that has masqueraded as 'defense' in recent decades . . ." "American Empire"? "Invasion force"? From a liberal this would be slanderous; from a conservative it is worse than slanderous. I expect this type of vitriol from unreconstructed Communist sympathizers, but not from such a respected conservative columnist—one who really should know better.

Conservatives need to face one fundamental fact: Our movement's most serious obstacle is an entrenched Democratic majority in Congress that has the votes to pursue its own agenda irrespective of the President (though admittedly President Bush should be more combative in attempting to set the agenda). Until conservatives regain control of the Congress—not necessarily a Republican majority, but a conservative working majority similar to that enjoyed during the first two Reagan years—the movement will continue to experience occasional setbacks, occasional victories, and half-a-loaf outcomes; which is why conservatives should focus their energy not on denying George Bush the GOP nomination, but on electing Republicans to Congress.

Robert K. Dornan
U.S. Congressman
Washington, D.C.

Church and State

For once, William McGurn's valued report from Washington was incorrect ["Pat Buchanan and the Intellectuals," Feb. 17]. I, of course, did not call for the "establishment of the Roman Catholic Church as the official religion of the United States." I tried to make clear, in my Saturday luncheon address, that after the historically disastrous separation of Church and State in Western nations, which led to the quasi-establishment of democratic and totalitarian ideologies as ersatz religions, the Church had no choice but to sign the social contract with civil society. The final act of signing is called the Second Vatican Council. The new formula has reduced the Church's status to that of a lobby, with the consequence that its *sui generis* mission is blocked. Because it is untrue that, as a mere pressure group among thousands of others, the Church is finally free. Alliance with the State has been turned into submission to society. This may be good or bad, but let's not veil it with hypocritical verbiage.

Thomas Molnar
Ridgewood, N.J.

Defending Russia

Charles Fairbanks, in his review-essay on Robert Conquest ["The Bard of Terror," Feb. 17], makes a very common error, i.e., maintaining that Stalin defended Russia better than Czar Nicholas II. At the time the Czar was overthrown, the German armies were in occupation of much of what had been the Polish parts of Russia, but in partial compensation for that the Russian armies were in occupation of a substantial slice of Austria–Hungary. When the Czar was in power they never jeopardized St. Petersburg, never came even close to Moscow, and certainly never reached what was then Tsaritsyn and was later Stalingrad.

The reason Czar Nicholas and his predecessors were more successful than Stalin was not that their generals were great but that they knew the value of allies. They would never have abandoned France to the tender mercies of the Germans. The Czars realized that it was important that the French army remain in existence if Russia was to be safe. Stalin never did.

While it is certainly true that the Russians did most of the ground fighting for the Allies in World War II, one should not forget that the Allies did play a significant role. The landings in North Africa occurred while the Germans were besieging Stalingrad, and the disastrous raid on Dieppe reminded Hitler that he had to keep a substantial German garrison in France.

Stalin, unlike Czar Nicholas, began the war by throwing away his potentially strongest ally. He only began to be successful in combat when other allies began their attacks on the west of Germany. How militarily important these attacks were in the early days of the Russian recovery is an obscure problem. Still, the statement that Stalin did better than the Czar is simply not true.

Gordon Tullock
University of Arizona
Tucson, Ariz.

Dining Business

The appallingly joyless advice on how to set a table that was inflicted on your readers by Digby Anderson could only have come from an Englishman ["Delectations," March 2].

Who else but the victim of that kingdom's sorry cuisine could describe a meal in these words: "We are at business and need to see what we are doing—and what others are trying to do to us."

Perhaps if Mr. Anderson had spent less time eyeing the grinders of Italian waiters and more time appreciating Italian food and manners, he might have discovered how delightful dining can be.

Greg Erlandson
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Apologies

Mary Battiata was incorrectly identified as being from the *New York Times* in William McGurn's piece, "Not Kafkaesque" [March 2]. In fact, she reports for the *Washington Post*. And the final quotation in the piece was from Michael Semin.

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Gregg was shooting, I was running audio, and elbow to elbow we fought for a good camera position. It was crazy. There were photographers and reporters and camera people all over the candidate. And it was only 8:15 am.

We traveled all day — from schoolhouse to Rotary Club to party headquarters — watching the candidate shake hands, kiss babies, smile and wave. But as it got later and colder, the crowds thinned out and the reporters left to find phones and file their stories.

Finally, it was the last stop. We were standing in a small diner, with only the candidate, a few patrons and our camera. It was pure C-SPAN. Local people talking about local concerns. Nothing staged. Nothing set up. While we were shooting, a local reporter popped in for one last unsuccessful attempt at an exclusive interview. As she was walking out the door, she looked over at us, shook her head and said, "Unbelievable. You guys are still at it."

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FROM THE EDITOR

Bouquets and Brickbats

■ Last week, NATIONAL REVIEW won an award as the best conservative magazine from *The Washington Journalism Review* and the College of Journalism at the University of Maryland. We were in good company: Brit Hume was named the best White House correspondent, *Nightline* the best TV news-discussion program, Charles Osgood the best radio reporter, etc.

Recognition by one's professional colleagues is always a pleasure. But it was a relief to me that we had not done quite as well as *The New Republic*, which not only won the "best liberal magazine" award but also came second in the conservative category. I am having enough trouble over our qualified endorsement of Pat Buchanan (some readers objecting to the endorsement, some to the qualifications) without having to deny it was the work of *NR*'s liberal faction.

There was a slight hitch at the awards ceremony, however, when *NR*, listed to follow *The New Republic*, was inadvertently skipped over. I stood in the wings, thinking it was my turn, scarcely able to believe the praises lavished on us: "photographs frequently sensational," a feature on paedophilia in the priesthood, and the "hottest" cover of the year, our shot of a nude, pregnant Demi Moore.

Some mistake, surely. I may not be the most "hands on" editor, but I would have remembered our running a nude cover shot of Demi Moore.

And a mistake there had been. Miss Tina Brown tripped up to accept the award for "the most exciting magazine" on behalf of . . . *Vanity Fair*.

Oh well, they said nice things about NATIONAL REVIEW when our turn eventually came. And it is nice to have the award for our wall.

■ Two familiar names disappear from our masthead this issue. Radek Sikorski, our Roving Correspondent, has resigned to become the Deputy Defense Minister in Poland. Radek has covered wars and commotions in Afghanistan, Angola, Namibia, South Africa, Ukraine, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and, of course, Poland. He has probably heard more shots fired in anger than any other Deputy Defense Minister in the world today.

But whether galloping along on horseback to avoid Soviet helicopter gunships, or restoring a castle in his native country, Radek is essentially a romantic enthusiast. As such he may find the bureaucratic side of government somewhat unexciting. Defense Ministries, even in Poland, are likely to think that the real enemy is not the Russians but the Finance Ministry.

We congratulate Radek, but we hope to see him back at *NR* before he turns into a filing cabinet.

Matthew Scully, our Associate Literary Editor, also leaves us, to become a speechwriter with Vice President Quayle. Matthew's book reviews have already won him a following. What readers cannot know, however, is that he was also the anonymous author of some of our best editorial paragraphs.

And given his new job, one campaign Matt ran shows a certain prescience. He was the author of "Bust Watch," a series in which he attacked congressional authorities for omitting the bust of Spiro Agnew, alone of Vice Presidents, from the U.S. Capitol.

That omission will now be rectified, as the final edition of "Bust Watch" proclaims on page 11. We congratulate Matthew on his first successful campaign. He must now turn his attention to getting full funding for SDI.

Anonymously, of course.

■ My reference to "the oddly named Wimpy" hamburger in a recent column provoked an avalanche of letters. I now know from *NR* readers that Wimpy was a *Popeye* character whose catchline was "I will gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today."

Of course, I've always known that some things were more important than politics. But I never realized it was hamburgers. —JOHN O'SULLIVAN

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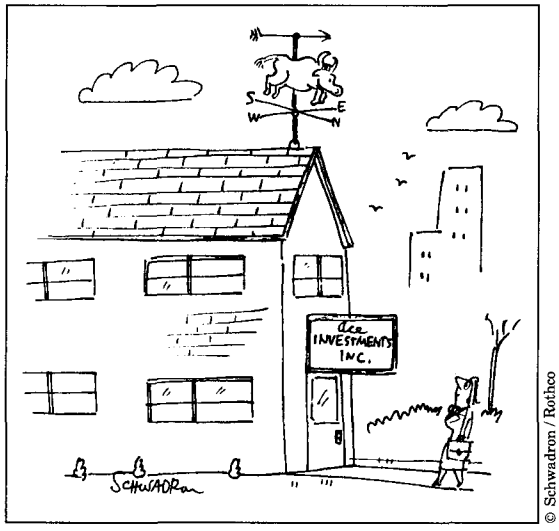
FOR THE RECORD

■ After Georgia primary, but before **Bill Clinton**'s victories on Super Tuesday, **Mario Cuomo** predicted Clinton would emerge as definite Democratic nominee "within two weeks" and said that he, Cuomo, would campaign enthusiastically for him. "That personal stuff [referring to allegations of **Gennifer Flowers**] is not going to mean anything." . . . **George Bush** and the Republican Party got a vote of confidence in the form of election odds offered (pre Super Tuesday) by **Ladbroke's**, England's largest bookie. Both the Republican Party and Bush himself enjoy 4 to 9 odds; the odds on **Pat Buchanan** are 33 to 1. Democratic Party stands at 13 to 8, with Clinton's odds 5 to 2 and **Paul Tsongas**'s 6 to 1. **Jerry Brown** is a 100 to 1 shot.

■ Democratic ex-Mayor of New York **Ed Koch** came out with surprise support for re-election of Republican Senator **Alfonse D'Amato**, who faces a large field of opponents including **Geraldine Ferraro**. . . . Last month, incidentally, D'Amato tangled with Gov. Cuomo at convention of New York State Association of Towns. Cuomo, apparently angered by D'Amato's reference to Change-NY's Counter-Budget, launched ad-hominem attack on Change-NY's founders, including his one-time opponent for governorship, **Lew Lehrman**. . . . In governors' contests, Rhode Island first-termer **Bruce Sundlun** (D.), whose track record is mixed (he has cut state spending in the face of a serious fiscal crisis, but has raised taxes sharply), is favored for re-election unless liberal Republican former Rep. **Claudine Schneider** runs against him. Mrs. Schneider—who gave up her seat to challenge Sen. **Claiborne Pell** (D.) in disastrous 1990 midterm elections—has not so far declared. . . . **Lenora Fulani**, the aggressive black candidate of the way-out-left New Alliance Party, is attempting to block the appearance of Tsongas and Brown on New York primary ballot April 7. Miss Fulani (who ran for President before, in 1988, and who has ties to **Louis Farrakhan** and **Al Sharpton**) is mad at the Democrats because they refused to let her into their public debates in New Hampshire. She threatens to retaliate by keeping official Democratic candidates out of black and Hispanic areas.

■ "When facts change, policy must change," former UN Ambassador **Jeane Kirkpatrick** told Conservative Political Action Conference last month, in an appeal to include Russia and the other new republics in the Western system of things. "For the first time since the spring of 1936," she said, "we are not facing mortal danger." . . . **Deng Xiaoping**'s China is more likely than **Boris Yeltsin**'s Russia to provoke battles in U.S. presidential campaign. China is known to be selling highly sophisticated weapons, including some with nuclear components, to Iran, Syria, and maybe other Middle Eastern governments. This undermines George Bush's determination—shared by many conservatives because of possible effects on Hong Kong—to keep China in Most Favored Nation trade category.



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■ The Queer Nation has launched a nationwide boycott against Boy Scouts of America for alleged discrimination. "We're here, we're queer, we're going camping," chanted protestors dressed like Scouts at a demonstration in Washington. . . . Dartmouth College, officially a citadel of political correctness, is being lobbied by the Tobacco Disinvestment Project to get rid of tobacco stocks in its endowment. The college does not make its holdings public but admits that "at times" it has held such stocks. **Brad Krevor**, Disinvestment Project's executive director, said that Harvard and others have already disinvested. "At Johns Hopkins they looked at the issue, said 'of course,' and voted unanimously to divest," said Krevor. . . . **Michael Milken**, now serving a ten-year jail sentence in California, gave a lengthy interview to **James W. Michaels** and **Phyllis Berman**, published in *Forbes*. "Wealth is a by-product of solving problems and creating value," said Milken in a Q&A conducted over a prison pay-phone. "I think of myself as a social scientist. Looking at what is happening in society, what society needs. The best investment is a good social scientist." . . . **Richard Nixon**'s *Seize the Moment: America's Challenge in a One-Superpower World* was his seventh book to make the *New York Times* best-seller list—a record for serious non-fiction works.

■ The Conservative Society of North Carolina, chartered a few months ago "to help preserve and advance the principles of conservatism in North Carolina," is open for business. Those interested can write to Society at P. O. Box 471806, Charlotte, N.C. 28247, or call its president, **Timothy W. Howard**, at 919-592-1942. . . . **Wm. F. Buckley Jr.** will deliver **Fulton J. Sheen** Society lecture April 14 in New York City's University Club. For more information, call 718-821-5671.

■ The Center for Constitutional Rights, alleging First Amendment violation, is suing U.S. Patent Office over refusal to register logo of the Old Glory Condom Corporation—a wavy stars-and-stripes condom in red, white, and blue. The package says: "We believe it is patriotic to protect and save lives."

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THE WEEK

■ Another flash from *Newsweek*: "Passions about this election are running high."

■ Aren't election-year romances wonderful? For three years it seemed George Bush could not bring himself to mention Ronald Reagan's name—not when the Berlin Wall came down, not when the Evil Empire collapsed, not when he recited the roll call of heroes of the cold war in his State of the Union address. Mr. Reagan apparently returned the favor when he forbade press cameras to record the meeting with Mr. Bush at his home in California; a White House wag told us the Reagans look like "hostages" in the stiff, pro-forma photo of the occasion. But as he does battle for the GOP nomination with a belligerent Pat Buchanan, George Bush has started referring to his "friend Ronald Reagan" with notable frequency. Very sweet of you, Peggy.

■ Surprise No. 1: One of the Democratic presidential candidates is living in the real world. Surprise No. 2: It's none other than Governor Moonbeam. Jerry Brown has become an unexpectedly strong contender in the race, outlasting Bob Kerrey and Tom Harkin. He's running an anti-establishment campaign (don't they all?), but his platform really does feature something novel: a flat 13 per cent income tax, with few loopholes. What's more—we must be dreaming—the *New York Times* has run an ecstatic description of the plan in its editorial column: Brown's simplified code "taxes every dollar of income only once, subsidizes saving, favors the poor, and is simple, simple, simple. . . . Gone would be a zillion pages of tax complexities." Imagine a Democrat proposing this. Hell, imagine a Republican proposing it.

■ The straw poll conducted among delegates of the Conservative Political Action Conference last month suggests that many conservatives support Pat Buchanan *despite* what they perceive as his support for protectionism and isolationism. Some 85 per cent agreed with Buchanan on taxes, whereas only 46 per cent agreed with him on immigration, 41 per cent on foreign policy, and 50 per cent on trade. Conservative support for Buchanan is based on a desire to put conservatism back into the GOP, not to put Buchanan's more questionable issues into conservatism.

■ Senator Jay Rockefeller (D., W.Va.) is pushing a tax provision that would tax owners of non-union mines to pay for medical benefits for retired United Mine Workers who so impoverished the mines they worked for that only the non-union mines have anything left to pay for the pensions, so the plan now is to let them impoverish the mines they failed to ruin the first time around, if it's up to the strange Senator Jay Rockefeller.

■ What do you do when presented with evidence that your product costs lives? If you're a federal bureaucrat and the product is regulation, you "fudge the analysis" with "statistical legerdemain" and "specious argument," and generally "cower behind bureaucratic mumbo-jumbo." At least that's what the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration did in recent years. A study by Robert Crandall of the Brookings Institution and John Graham of Harvard found that the NHTSA's Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) regulations—which mandate that the fleet of cars produced by an automaker in a given year must average so many miles per gallon, currently 27.5—cost from two to four thousand lives per model-year fleet. Why? The only practical way to improve average mileage so drastically is to sell more small cars. Because smaller cars are flimsier and have less space than larger ones, they are less safe—you are twice as likely to die in any given accident. But because CAFE is environmentally correct and greatly increases the power and prestige of a bureaucracy whose biggest previous coup was air bags (they fudged the data there too, as it happens), the NHTSA has ignored the fact that the "S" in its name stands for Safety. Moreover, Naderite groups like Public Citizen have supported CAFE even though Nader first made his name with

"The women in this office have their own way of handling sexual harassers."

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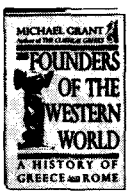

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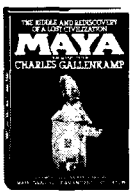

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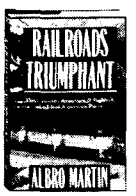

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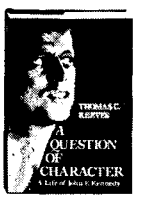

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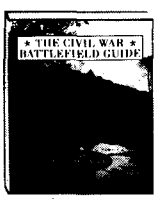

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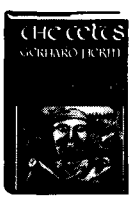

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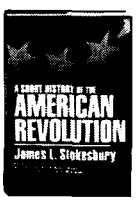

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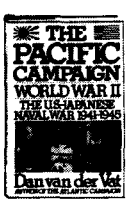

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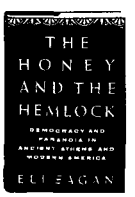

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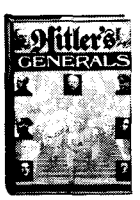

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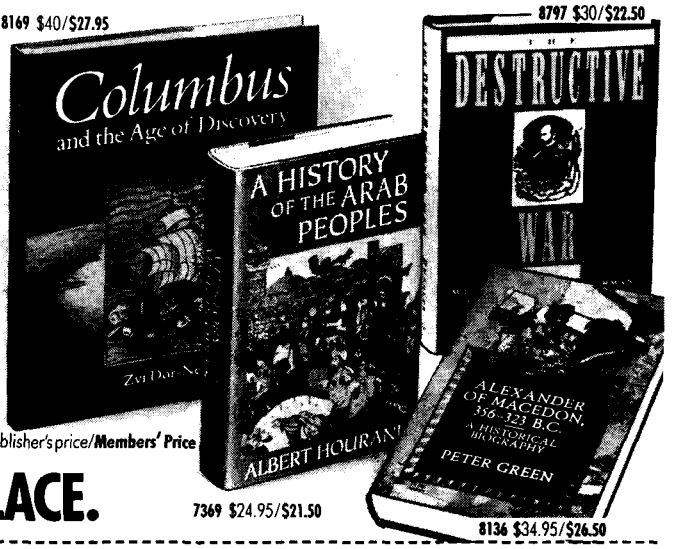

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Unsafe at Any Speed, a book that called on government to make Detroit worry more about safety. Meanwhile, Senator Richard Bryan (D., Nev.) wants to increase the CAFE figure to 40.0. Quite a saving at the gas pump—if you live to see it.

■ Mario Cuomo a supply-sider? The governor says he understands the need for economic incentives, and indeed, New York's top income-tax rate has been cut in half, to 7.875 per cent, during the Cuomo years. The state's economy, however, has trailed the nation's. This apparent paradox is now explained by economist Alvin Rabushka in a study published by Change-NY. Mr. Rabushka reports that while the top tax rate came down, fewer deductions were allowed, the income at which the top rate kicks in was lowered to $13,000, and the lowest marginal tax rate was raised. As a result, New Yorkers now pay $1,127 per capita in state income taxes, which is twice the national average of $498, and more than they paid before the Cuomo tax "cut." Mr. Rabushka urges a flat 5.0 per cent income tax for New York. Mr. Cuomo, by playing games with his state's income tax, has delivered a flat economy.

■ The United States, tailing a North Korean ship suspected of carrying Scud missiles bound for Iran and Syria, had indicated its preparedness to board the vessel if it reached the Persian Gulf. But the freighter slipped through our net into port. Even while saying we were prepared to intercept it, Washington had seemed paralyzed by the legal technicalities. Under the UN Security Council resolutions against Iraq, the United States was explicitly empowered to prevent delivery of the missiles if they were bound for Iraq—which they weren't. And so American policy-makers were in a state of intellectual confusion about whether and how they could do what was palpably necessary and proper. When a gangster state (North Korea) markets a dangerous weapon—one which we have declared it our solemn policy to ban from international commerce—and transfers it, moreover, to two other gangster states (Iran and Syria), it should be self-evident that we are not barred by law or morality from defending ourselves, our allies, or world peace. What the United States now needs is a range of imaginative instruments for intercepting such shipments in the future (including covert ones). What the Bush Administration needs is to be reminded that Michael Dukakis lost the last election and that there is no obligation to respond to such crises as he would.

■ As we go to press, South Africa is a week away from its referendum on whether to go forward with constitutional change. None of the political actors is what you could call happy. President F. W. de Klerk was hit hard by the by-election loss that provoked the referendum. Andries Treurnicht of the Conservative Party ("conservative" in the South African context meaning, principally, opposed to ending apartheid) is afraid that political change has already gone too far to be stopped. Nelson Mandela, on the other hand, says it has not gone far enough fast enough. If Mr. de Klerk's referendum succeeds, the next battle will be to gain support for his proposed constitution, a subtle document that would, by dividing power between the central government and various regions, help protect minorities in a new, majority-rule polity. (And these minorities, as the Western press seldom notes, include not only whites and non-ANC blacks, but also "coloreds," Indians, and other Asians, who may remember what happened to Asians when Idi Amin took over in Uganda.) Mr. Mandela, who wants one man, one vote, in a unitary state, resists provisions to protect minority rights, which he labels a continuation of minority rule. Whether South Africa has even a chance at a future (cf. Zimbabwe, Kenya, et al.) depends on whether his or de Klerk's constitutional view prevails.

■ Porn stars Cicciolina, Vima Bonino, and Eva Orlowsky announced their candidacies for the Italian parliament, as members of the Party of Love. We have a slogan for them: "You're still going to get BLEEPED by the government, but you'll like it."

■ The long, slow deconstruction of the reputation of Herbert Norman, the Canadian ambassador to Egypt who committed suicide in 1957 when his activities in the Communist Party came under scrutiny, appears to be nearing its end. For years his defenders denied that he had ever been a Communist. Then his membership in the Party was conceded, but was alleged to have ended before he entered the Canadian Foreign Service. More recently his friends have been satisfied to insist that, Communist or not, he was never a spy. But now the British spy-catcher Peter Wright, in his second volume published from Australia (to avoid British censorship), has exploded that comforting myth too. Speaking of

1912 and All That

It's true that Teddy toppled Taft
  And tore a hole so wide,
The two (each on a separate raft)
  Departed with the tide;
But Pat ain't Teddy, nor is George
The anvil in Buchanan's forge:
It's just that George does raise one's gorge,
  And that's a bitch to hide.

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Anthony Blunt, the famous Fourth Man in the pre-war Cambridge espionage ring, whom he interrogated in the mid 1960s, Wright asserts that "Blunt revealed to me that he had recruited him" (i.e., Norman). Now, perhaps, Canadians can get on to the even more important matter of former Prime Minister Lester Pearson and his activities as Counselor of Embassy in Washington during World War II.

■ *Pravda* has announced that it will henceforth publish only three days a week. So far, Western calls for a bailout have been muted.

■ The press reported the other day that a joint band of about five hundred former Sandinistas and Contras in Nicaragua, armed with automatic rifles and grenades, occupied the town of Ocotal briefly before withdrawing under pressure from government authorities. The former foes had joined together to protest the government's failure to provide them with land and housing, as apparently promised under various peace accords. The serious moral to this story is that President Violeta Chamorro is badly in need of help if she is to turn her democratic experiment into a permanent victory for democracy. But we can't help also thinking about Francis Fukuyama and his insight about the banality of our political existence on this planet now that Communism has been defeated.

■ BUST WATCH: You may begin seeing Spiro Agnew's face around Capitol Hill. As we have reported, all former Vice Presidents, because of their role as President of the Senate, have a bronze bust in the Capitol—all except Spiro Agnew, that is. His absence, as we've also reported, is no oversight on the part of the Capitol Architect/Ethicist's office. He just hadn't gotten around to it. And Alaska Senator Ted Stevens, ranking minority member of the Rules Committee, was delayed in taking action because he didn't have the former Vice President's address. But he has now notified Mr. Agnew that he will pursue the matter. For Mr. Agnew's sake, we hope the task isn't handed over to Andres Serrano.

■ Frederick Goodwin, head of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration, was forced to resign when remarks (reporting on serious primate studies) that compared dysfunctional inner-city neighborhoods to "jungles" whose denizens behave like "male monkeys" were branded "grossly offensive" and "extremist" by Ted Kennedy, who was doubtless worried that Goodwin might next say that male monkeys behave like Kennedys.

■ At the cutting edge of corporate philanthropy, the Minority Management Association is donating two metal detectors to a public school in New York City.

■ And we guess it makes sense, sort of, but Dr. Kevorkian opposes capital punishment.

Divided We Fall

NATIONAL REVIEW'S objectives in giving Pat Buchanan a qualified endorsement in the early primaries have been achieved to a degree far greater than we could have expected. President Bush has already fired the head of the National Endowment for the Arts, embraced voluntary school prayer, and disavowed the 1990 budget deal. None of these gains would have been achieved without Mr. Buchanan's candidacy. Conservatives have that to thank him for.

The Buchanan candidacy has also been a blessing, albeit in disguise, for the Republican Party. It woke up a White House immured in a complacency that, if undisturbed, would have invited defeat in November. Meanwhile, Mr. Buchanan gave discontented voters a safe haven in the Republican column. Some of those voters were independents, some Reagan Democrats who might otherwise have returned to their former allegiance. This was an important service to the Republicans because voting Democratic is insidious: like adultery, the first time you feel terribly guilty, but it gets progressively easier.

Finally, Mr. Buchanan deserves the gratitude of society for dispatching David Duke into the outer darkness of single-digit support. Mr. Duke was promoted as a political force by Mr. Bush when he handed him the important quota issue by signing the civil-rights compromise on Senator Kennedy's terms. Without Mr. Buchanan in the field, Mr. Duke would have been the sole repository of protest votes. His success would have discredited conservative issues and set off a national liberal talk-in on the unregenerate racism of American society. As it is, he has been confined to the racist fringe.

After Super Tuesday, however, Mr. Buchanan confronts a difficulty earlier than he had expected. He has done both too well and not well enough. He cannot prevent Mr. Bush's renomination, but he can continue to win thirtysomething per cent of the vote in most remaining primaries and might even score upsets in such states as Michigan or even California (where Governor Pete Wilson's inept tax hike has discredited moderate Republicans). But a Republican duel all the way to the convention would weaken President Bush to the point where he might be vulnerable to almost any Democratic candidate in November. That would be in the interests of no one on the Right—including Mr. Buchanan, who would be bitterly resented by party regulars for contributing to defeat.

Yet there seems to be almost a conspiracy to keep

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Mr. Buchanan in the race. His occasional coded offers to withdraw have been ignored and, as William McGurn points out on page 18, even rebuffed with attacks that provoke him to keep fighting. Those attacks come from three quarters. First, there are those, such as the 13 signatories of the letter in our last issue, who believe Mr. Buchanan to be anti-Semitic and thus unworthy of any support, however qualified. Second, there are Bush campaign officials anxious to discredit an opponent they cannot be sure of dispatching. And, third, there are conservative leaders who wish to squash now any prospect of Mr. Buchanan's ascendancy in the conservative movement in 1996. Some of these leaders may be inspired by considerations of personal rivalry; but some undoubtedly harbor the genuine conviction that Mr. Buchanan's conservatism is too narrow, exclusive, and ungenerous to be the conservatism of tomorrow.

LET US ADDRESS these objections in order. NATIONAL REVIEW has consistently taken the view that Mr. Buchanan, though not himself anti-Semitic, has nonetheless said things that have given rise to suspicion among reasonable people that he is. We have therefore called on him to reflect on his past statements, to retract the relevant phrases, and to apologize to those he has offended by them, even if he is conscious of no ill-feeling or wrongdoing on his part.

Mr. Buchanan in turn is entitled to evidence that a retraction and apology would be heeded sympathetically by serious conservatives and not used to condemn him further. The relentless hostility of some critics will hardly encourage him in that expectation. He may also wonder if any such apology would be reported without bias, since the media, having characterized him as a candidate mired in controversy, have successively played down his condemnation of David Duke, his appeal to racists and bigots *not* to vote for him, and his statement on the Middle East guaranteeing Israel's security and confining Palestinians to a small, demilitarized rump state.

These are not trivial objections. But they are outweighed by other factors. His conservative critics are in general men of goodwill. Continued silence on his part will imply consent to the allegations against him, serving to justify his critics and to undermine his defenders. And given the ambiguity of the case against him, his failure to apologize is now the main support for the indictment. So whether Mr. Buchanan's critics will seem justified in their suspicion is now largely up to him. We believe not, but he may prove us wrong.

The criticisms by Republican Party managers, being entirely tactical, are easier to answer. If they believe Mr. Buchanan will depart the field in good time, they will keep their criticisms impersonal in order not to devalue the support that he might give the President at and after the convention. If not, they will unleash Mr. Bush's bloodthirstiest surrogates. How can this second course be avoided? Let us suggest three steps. Rich Bond, RNC chairman, should apologize to Mr. Buchanan for comparing him to David Duke—and Mr. Buchanan should accept the apology. Then, after the next primary in which Mr. Buchanan does well, Mr. Bush's campaign managers should pay a few conventional tributes to his fighting performance. And they should then open negotiations with Miss Bay Buchanan on exactly how, when, where, and with what degree of enthusiasm Mr. Bush and Mr. Buchanan will shake hands.

That brings us to those conservatives who want to prevent Mr. Buchanan's shaping of conservatism between now and 1996. Let them reflect that Mr. Buchanan will emerge from this campaign with a reputation for political courage, the gratitude of the grass roots for having dragged Mr. Bush to the right, and a computerized list of supporters larger than any other conservative has had since Ronald Reagan. Whatever else happens, he will be a major conservative leader, and Jack Kemp, Bill Bennett, Dick Cheney, Vin Weber, and Newt Gingrich will have to debate and struggle with him in what will be a profoundly important debate on the nature of conservatism in the post-cold-war world.

IN THAT DEBATE, we expect, for reasons we have repeatedly outlined, to oppose Mr. Buchanan much of the time. But it is crucial that the debate be as fraternal as it is vigorous, as civilized as it is sharp. As the Goldwater experience showed, fierce personal attacks on another conservative—especially if they seem to reflect and endorse liberal criticisms—may increase his negative ratings with the general public. But they reinforce the loyalty of the conservative rank-and-file and undermine the critics, who are seen as trafficking with the enemy. Whatever lofty motives inspire such attacks, they are self-defeating in practice.

If the debate stays fraternal, Mr. Buchanan will be one of several leaders of a united conservative movement. If an attempt is made to drive him from the fold, he will take a good many followers with him—whether into a third party free of the constraints imposed by major-party politics, or into a fractious, embittered internal opposition determined to rule or ruin conservatism and the Republican Party. In either event, the Right would be divided for years to come. Such a split is almost the only way in which the Democrats could win and hold power.

We therefore urge Mr. Buchanan to withdraw from the campaign and throw his support to Mr. Bush after the Michigan primary; we urge the Bush campaign to smooth his way by avoiding personal attacks in the meantime; and we hope that other con-

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servatives will acknowledge his achievements in restoring conservative concerns to the White House's agenda. We are, to be sure, asking a lot of all three. We are asking them to act in accordance with their interests rather than their resentments.

The Better Half

AS BILL CLINTON gladhands his way to the Democratic presidential nomination, the impression is spreading that his wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton, is the brains in the family. The impression is correct, but not altogether reassuring. Mrs. Clinton is, like her husband, intensely ambitious. She must have had reservations about moving to a state like Arkansas, a real nowhere for a young woman who had already served as a legal counsel for the House Judiciary Committee during Watergate. But Arkansas turned into a resource for this resourceful woman.

She managed to make her own mark in the field of children's rights, building her own power base in a major Arkansas law firm. She is a member of five corporate boards and is chairman (currently on leave) of the Washington-based Children's Defense Fund. In a study of her writings in *The New York Review of Books*, Garry Wills calls Mrs. Clinton "an innovative litigator" and an important "legal theorist and strategist" for children's rights. Some of her achievements, as he enumerates them, sound somewhat technical: "In her fields of estate law, child custody, and children's rights, she was, for instance, the first trial lawyer in Arkansas to conduct the examination by satellite of a witness in a hospital outside the state." (Low whistles.)

But she has also acted consistently to reduce the area of parental authority and to make children direct clients of government agencies. On her principles, the state could decide that parents violate their children's "rights" by keeping them out of public schools, or deny them "equal protection of the laws" when they forbid them to do whatever liberal judges think they should be allowed to do. No doubt other implications would be discovered by ingenious lawyers, to the detriment of the family's independence of the state. It's chillingly . . . Swedish.

But Wills doesn't seem to notice that Mrs. Clinton's advocacy always seems to result in enlarging the role of the state and, incidentally, the power of lawyers like herself. He does observe her general preference for "comprehensive social programs," a phrase that is generally a trailer for unaccountable bureaucracy, mass idleness, dependency, and the breakdown of civil order.

Tom Harkin's fate shows that the age of the "real" Democrat—the old-fashioned socialist who wants the government to run industry—has gone the way of Bolshevism. The Clintons represent a new breed of corporatist Democrats who want to foster government–business "partnership" in the economy, but see independent institutions like the family as obstacles to the achievement of "fairness" in society. And in that kind of politics, the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

Brave New World

THE *New York Times*, which seems to have a vocation for obtaining stolen Pentagon documents, has come up with another one—and doesn't like what it sees. "Defense Planning Guidance for Fiscal Years 1994–1999" is an internal planning paper designed to guide Secretary of Defense Cheney and the various services. It offers a thoughtful rationale for U.S. engagement in the world. U.S. military forces are not only being reduced by 30 per cent between now and 1997; they are also being restructured for the requirements of the post-cold-war environment. This paper explains how.

It speaks confidently of the United States as the only remaining superpower and points out that potential threats to our interests still exist; i.e., we still need a defense policy. (That's where we begin to lose the *New York Times*.) "We will retain the preeminent responsibility," the document states, "for addressing selectively those wrongs which threaten not only our interests, but those of our allies or friends, or which could seriously unsettle international relations." The potential dangers include: Third World thugs armed with weapons of mass destruction; the continued existence of a nuclear-armed Russian superstate for which there is no counterweight in Europe without the U.S.; and a vacuum in East Asia and the Pacific, unless we play a similar pivotal role there. As the Gulf crisis demonstrated, we are the only country able to mobilize international efforts to meet such dangers. And the

With Madame Defarge

Frohnmayer's head's been severed,
  But Darman holds his high,
While Brady's, though the tumbrels
  Cast shadows passing by,
Remains secure as Louis's
  Appeared before Madame
Began her fateful knitting
  As guillotines went *Wham!*

W. H. VON DREELE

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document argues persuasively that our alliances with Western Europe and Japan are essential both to maintain the balance of power, and to diminish any incentive for those powerful friends to pursue a superpower status of their own. A world dominated by a single superpower will be more stable than one divided, like Gaul, into three parts.

Most of this is unexceptionable as a description of the potential problems that a serious national-security policy will protect against. Just as George Kennan's famous "X" article in *Foreign Affairs* in 1947 articulated the idea of "containment" that guided U.S. policy for decades, this document reflects some serious thinking about a new era. Some of the language is too self-congratulatory; some of it might be phrased more diplomatically. But it is—no secret—the blueprint for a *Pax Americana*.

Some object to that. We do not. The economic burden of such leadership is far less than before. The Administration is always badgered by defense-slashing Democrats to explain the rationale for its force and budget recommendations. It is now doing so. *New York Times* columnists have criticized the document for, inter alia, neglecting the central role of the UN. *Please*. When the State Department issues its equivalent general strategy paper, be sure the UN will be mentioned. The Defense Department is thinking seriously about security. Secretary Cheney and his staff are to be congratulated.

Menachem Begin, R I P

MENACHEM BEGIN was the last survivor of that generation of Zionist leaders who seized, out of the ashes of the Holocaust, the opportunity to realize their vision of a Jewish

BCCI AND SENATOR KERRY REVISITED

IN OUR October 7, 1991, issue, NATIONAL REVIEW published an article by Robert Stowe England, entitled "The Real Scandal," which harshly criticized certain aspects of the investigation of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) by Senator John Kerry's Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics, and International Operations. Senator Kerry telephoned to protest our article, and he followed up with a 14-page single-spaced letter which listed 28 separate errors of fact or analysis. Mr. England, David Kendall (NATIONAL REVIEW's lawyer), and I met with the senator and his staff for nearly two hours, and we promised to investigate his criticisms.

Having conducted that investigation, we are now in a dilemma. In law, we could stand behind every comma and preposition of our original article. Mr. England, a distinguished journalist, our frequent contributor, and a man unknown to libel suits, had no animus against Senator Kerry, investigated carefully, uncovered knowledgeable sources, and firmly believed, as we did, that the article was entirely accurate as written. He had sought information from the senator's office and had been greeted with hostile suspicion. In the quaint legal formulation, we published without "actual malice," because we neither knew of any untruths nor doubted what we printed. We would be fully entitled in law to reject the senator's protest entirely. But having carefully analyzed the senator's letter, rechecked our sources, and reviewed the new information and documents that the senator and his staff provided us, we have arrived at a conclusion we didn't anticipate. We still think our article contained valid and serious criticisms, and we reiterate some of them later in this note. In all honesty, however, we think we owe the senator an apology for some errors that would have been flagged in football as "unnecessary roughness."

Let me classify the various charges. Some of the senator's points strike us as tendentious and/or silly, and we think he can't really urge them with a straight face. For example, he attacks us for writing that Clark Clifford convinced Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Claiborne Pell to extend a subpoena deadline (when it was a Foreign Relations Committee aide reporting to Pell who actually granted the extension); that investigator Jack Blum left the Kerry subcommittee to go on to help Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau break the BCCI case (Blum did, and Morgenthau did); that the subcommittee spent a lot of time investigating the far-Left theories of the Christic Institute (it did); and that the intrinsic problem of conspiracy theories is that the overwhelming majority of them aren't true (they aren't).

Several other points raised by the senator seem to us fairly debatable as matters of opinion or evaluation. We remain unrepentantly convinced that the senator often treated the subcommittee's investigation as a political football; that a key breakthrough on BCCI (in the person of José Blandón) was supplied to the subcommittee courtesy of the Left's least favorite senator, Jesse Helms; that Senator Kerry could have been more aggressive in trying to wrest documents from First American; and that the senator should have challenged Clark Clifford's claim, made in a meeting with the senator on September 14, 1988, that BCCI "was squeaky clean and happy to cooperate."

But we would correct certain other points. We accept that the senator's subcommittee did not bring Communists to Washington to testify, and we think we were mistaken to assert that the subcommittee's funds were running out when it scheduled hearings with José Blandón in the spring of 1988 (although we don't back down from our assertion that the subcommittee's credibility was running on empty at that time). We don't think our thrust that "the fall of BCCI would have hurt

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state on their ancestral soil in Palestine. To be sure, Begin's role in all of that was controversial. He led the militant Irgun, whose battle against the British sometimes spilled over into bitter clashes with David Ben-Gurion's Haganah and the kinder, gentler wing of the Zionist movement. Yet in the end he became a statesman: after thirty years as leader of the opposition in the new democratic state, the firebrand became prime minister. There too, his pugnacity had its vindications and its controversies—from the brilliant strike against the Iraqi nuclear bomb factory in 1981, to the disaster of the Lebanese war in 1982–83.

History will remember him most, perhaps, for his statesmanship with Egypt, which turned Anwar Sadat's extraordinary visit to Jerusalem into Israel's first peace treaty with an Arab neighbor. But history will also remember him for his rare personal qualities—his moral strength and unbending conviction. His life's journey had led him through the darkness; he lost his parents and a brother to the Nazis. The survival of the Jewish people was ensured by men like him. It is hard to imagine Menachem Begin resting in peace anywhere; that was not his nature. Nonetheless, we wish his soul the blessings of the righteous God Who may yet grant his people the peace they have longed for, and deserve, and will surely grant it to him too.

S. I. Hayakawa, R I P

S. I. "Sam" Hayakawa made a reputation with his feistiness and left an impression with his gentleness.

I didn't meet him until 1988, five years after he had departed the U.S. Senate. He had been elected

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Kerry's career directly" is entirely a fair one. Yes, he was raising funds from fatcat lawyers beholden to BCCI, and yes, we still think that's wrong, but other fatcats would probably have bellied up to the senator's campaign bar in their stead.

More serious is an error of fact which we now believe we made about the scheduling of hearings on BCCI in September 1988. We were originally told on excellent authority that hearings were set for that time, that the staff was working full tilt to get ready for them, and that they were called off after Clark Clifford visited Senator Kerry. We believed that, and our piece referred more than once to the senator's "cancellation" of "planned hearings" in September 1988. Some of the evidence the senator adduces to refute our account isn't very persuasive. He provides us with a June 12, 1988, press clipping which repeatedly quotes him as saying he's going to "suspend" his subcommittee hearings until after the November general elections. We continue to believe that far from simply being "suspended" for a brief period, the BCCI hearings went into virtual catatonia for two years, whatever behind-the-scenes work the subcommittee was doing. But we are now persuaded that we were wrong to state or imply that subcommittee hearings were specifically scheduled—and then suddenly canceled—in September 1988. After publication our sources backtracked on this narrow point. But this wasn't simply a trivial factual detail; it was a key charge in the context of our criticisms of the senator and the way he conducted his investigation. We apologize to the senator for this error.

While the BCCI mess was indeed a scandal, Senator Kerry's performance in bringing it to light was not, *pace* our hyperbolic headline, the "real scandal." The flaws in his investigation, described in our article, were minor compared to the criminality of BCCI. And if the senator could have pursued José Blandón's evidence of this criminality more aggressively, he did pursue it. He was neither a prosecutor nor a regulator, and his investigative powers were specifically limited. When all is said and done, he was at least trying to do a job that others better situated weren't. And he deserves credit for that—even if the credit he deserves is considerably less than the credit he has claimed.

That said, we decline the senator's request to retract the article. We still think BCCI was left alone for too long by too many powerful people. We still believe that the senator's subcommittee dithered for two years and then was beaten to the punch by the Bank of England. In the light of this, we continue to feel that the senator was at least negligent in accepting campaign contributions from Clark Clifford and Robert Altman after he had met with them to discuss BCCI. And we think our description of the relationship between Senator Kerry and savings-and-loan *magnifico* David Paul was right on the money (as it were). We'll consider issuing the senator a halo on that one when he issues a subpoena to Mr. Paul. There were unholy links between David Paul's CenTrust and BCCI that should have been pretty evident early on.

The senator can still sue us for libel if he likes. We have no deal with him, and we doubt that he will much like this attempt to set the record straight. But we and Mr. England recall with distaste the libel cases involving Ariel Sharon and William Westmoreland in which *Time* and CBS were able to conceal serious journalistic errors behind the broad dike of the Sullivan libel rule of "actual malice." We do not think the media mantra "We stand by our story" is a sufficient retort to specific criticisms backed up by good evidence. We believe that the press (that's us, but also any of our readers who writes a pamphlet) ought to enjoy generous constitutional protections. But if the press doesn't acknowledge error when it gets it wrong, that is a real scandal.

—JOHN O'SULLIVAN

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after facing down radicals at San Francisco State University. A lot of other college presidents could have handled campus bullies the same way, but they didn't have the fortitude of this five-foot-six Nisei.

The Senate might have seemed the perfect place for one of the planet's great semanticists. It didn't turn out that way. Hayakawa, by then in his early seventies, got a reputation for drowsiness. Not that there was much for a freshman senator to do anyway, except logroll for sewer projects and the like. To use one of his favored oaths, there was a lot not to "give a good goddamn" about.

After he was scared off from seeking a second term, Hayakawa took up a cause that had been a signature of his from his time in office, the establishment of English as the official language of the United States. Again he was pitted against the Left, in what has become one of the litmus tests of "political correctness." Formal recognition of multilingualism is part of the insisted-upon end to racism, sexism, and homophobia in America.

The wider public has never understood what is wrong with prescribing English for civic purposes in this nation. An initiative campaign that Hayakawa led to this effect in California won overwhelmingly, as similar drives have in a dozen states. Yet in the political culture, including some cosmopolitan conservatives, the reaction has ranged from skepticism to hostility.

I had come to witness a U.S. English meeting when I was introduced to Hayakawa. Although tired after an evening session, he gained enthusiasm in his characteristically soft voice while expressing a love of our language. In his case, at least, the goal was to share its power and beauty more widely, not to exclude. —Tim W. Ferguson

NOTES & ASIDES

■ Dear Bill:

A brilliant column on Jonathan Yardley's assault on Bush, both in substance and in tone. I especially enjoyed the last paragraph, in which you provided details of your own avocational habits and lifestyle. To wit, you have never seen an episode of *Dallas*—or of Roseanne Barr or of Geraldo Rivera—but you *have* listened to *my* program! Had you admitted this you would have silenced any and all forthcoming criticism of your avocational habits and lifestyle.

Seriously, the piece was so pleasant to read. I intend to share it with my audience, for the point is one I struggle to make almost daily: that one need not engage in certain behavior or activity to know whether it is good or bad, right or wrong, or to be qualified to render comments about it.

Finally, tsk tsk. You really should endeavor to watch Oprah Winfrey. Barbara Walters says we can all learn much from her on the pressing issues of our time, such as priests who attack female members of their congregations, why the male sex drive is the root of all evil, how Bush and Reagan are responsible for Magic Johnson acquiring the HIV virus, and women who want to marry their daughters' husbands, to name just a few of the important things you are missing. I can't, after all, do it all.

My best,
Rush [Limbaugh]
New York, N.Y.

Dear Rush: What do you *mean* you can't do it all? That has never been *my* impression! Disillusioned

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

The Democrats, eager to peddle their economic agenda to The America People, have produced a documentary film explaining their fiscal policy. In case you haven't heard about it, it stars Danny DeVito, and it's called *Other People's Money*.

Sincerely,
Christopher Voccio
Johnston, R.I.

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

I'm a 12-and-a-half-year-old girl (and future World Leader) who watches your TV show (*Firing Line*) a lot, even though my mother always implores me to "Get that reptilian Fascist off the screen"! I have a set in my room so I watch there. I like the fact that you never raise your voice like say Bob Novak or most other right-wingers. I hope it's not because you're medicated. I think you should debate Studs Terkel on stuff. I've seen him and he's pretty good, though the exact opposite of you. I've never read your magazine NATIONAL REVIEW, but I have seen the commercials with Tom Selleck. Would you call him an intellectual? My father says you write spy novels, I think he's read some. I've corresponded with John Le Carré—he's a first-class gentleman. My grandmother admires you as an exemplar of the Protestant work ethic—and she's Catholic! How come you never ran for President? Because you wouldn't eat pork rinds? If so I don't blame you! My mother supports Jerry Brown for President, but I support Barney Frank even though he isn't running because he wrote me a nice letter. We're both Democrats but my father goes both ways, that's why they divorced. I know you're busy, so I'll let you get back to work now. Good luck, give my best to your family.

Respectfully & Affectionately,
Pizza J. McCorkle
Santa Monica, Calif.

Dear Pizza: The next time you write, please send photostat of your birth certificate. Cordially and skeptically, **—WFB**

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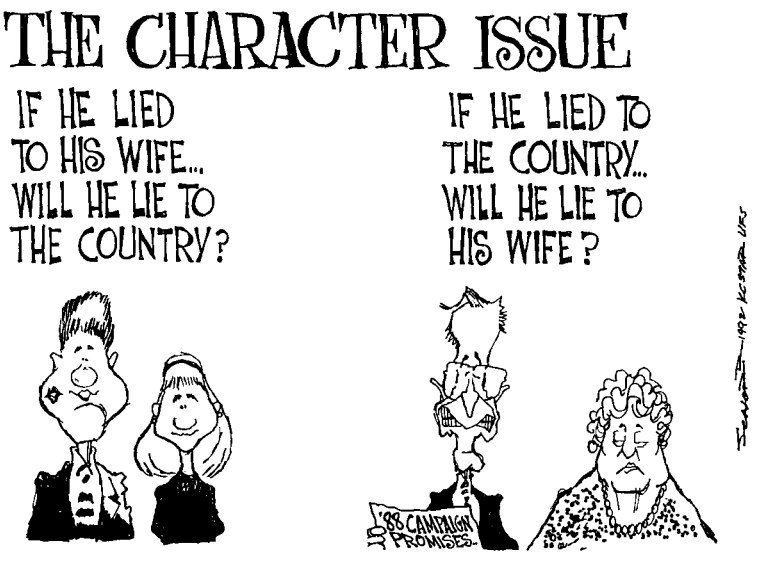
ON THE TRAIL

Clinton: The Roadside View

RICHARD BROOKHISER


THE CHARACTER ISSUE
IF HE LIED TO HIS WIFE... WILL HE LIE TO THE COUNTRY?
IF HE LIED TO THE COUNTRY... WILL HE LIE TO HIS WIFE?
'88 CAMPAIGN PROMISES

BALTIMORE, COLUMBUS, ATLANTA

IN MID JANUARY, Bill Clinton was lord of all he surveyed. Two months later, he was scrambling for victories, outside the South if he could manage them, though any victories, even in his back yard, would suit him fine. I wrote, when Clinton was up, of his smug half-smile, like that worn by Captain Kirk at the start of *Star Trek* episodes. By now, the Klingons had arrived.

On the eve of Junior Tuesday, the Maryland, Georgia, and Colorado primaries on March 3, Clinton debated his foes at a Beltway campus of the University of Maryland. It was their third debate in two days; Clinton's voice was rough as a grater, and the bags under his eyes looked like mime's makeup. He opened by hammering Paul Tsongas and his call for selective capital-gains tax cuts: "We don't need the best President Wall Street ever had." Clinton offered the signature pledge of all his speeches, his version of the social contract. As President, Clinton said, "I owe you": investment in schools; national standards for high-school tests; a two-year post-high-school apprenticeship program; a college education for anyone willing to give two years of voluntary service as a teacher, social worker, or cop. In return, at least in Arkansas, high-school dropouts would continue to lose their driver's licenses, and parents who didn't show up at parent–teacher conferences could be fined. "We can *do* something," Clinton insisted.

At his next stop, a rally at an off-campus bar, he varied the pledge, saying that he owed "a fine economic policy," in addition to an education package. What he wanted in return, he told the beer-drinking lacrosse players, was for them to say, " 'I believe in the possibilities of our country again.' Let's get our country back." He was not done for the night, for he drove into Baltimore, where he presented championship game jerseys to a high-school basketball team. The crowd cheered them, not him. "You know you're in a place that's really America," he said later, "when people care more who the center is than who the candidate is." After that, he addressed a gathering of supporters in a restaurant in Little Italy and spoke of the excitement of governing. "The thing I disagree with most about George Bush," he told this crowd, "is 'the vision thing.' Where there is no vision, the people perish. [Thank you, Reverend Jackson.] Children are being shot in school by people with no vision. People are out of work because there is no vision" in the White House. "I want government to be fun again." Still he was not done, for he went to a bar owned by a state senator—coddies and jumbo Polish on the menu, a video poker game along the wall—where he greeted the patrons and played a game of eight-ball. Clinton won when his opponent scratched.

"I hate to win that way," Clinton remarked next morning, "but I took it." He was standing at a metro stop in Prince Georges County, a black suburb of Washington. (Throughout the South and the near-South, Clinton played up black voters, black supporters, black backdrops.) Between handshakes, he fired at Tsongas again. "Not because he's pro-growth. *I'm* pro-growth." Clinton favors tax credits for investments he deems worthy. But he argued that an "Eighties-style capital-gains tax cut" would benefit only those who play the market, "giving something for nothing."

At his first stop in Georgia, a medical school in Macon, he wove health care into the many clauses of his contract. "If we don't take care of people, we'll be too sick to take advantage of the best economic policy." But the solemn center of the day came outside Atlanta, in a correctional facility on the back side of Stone Mountain. The road to the camp ran past an Assembly of God Church, a Confederate cemetery, a magnolia, and a yard containing a Christmas-candle lawn ornament and three cars up on blocks. Inside the camp was another typical Georgia sight, the puckered face and sloped brow of Senator Sam Nunn. Clinton had come to look at none of these things, but at young first offenders, who were being punished for their crimes—drug and alcohol offenses, mostly—with a taste of boot camp. Seventy young men in white uniforms

Mr. Brookhiser, an NR *Senior Editor, is the author of* The Way of the WASP *and of* The Outside Story, *an account of the 1984 presidential campaign.*

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drilled on a basketball court, singing as they marched: "Took me here and shaved my head / Taught me how to make my bed." Clinton has pushed a similar program in Arkansas, and is proud of its recidivism rates. "We can't afford to keep these men on asphalt behind this fence," he said at Stone Mountain. "We need them working, earning, raising children. . . . We can change the future by lifting up people and putting them first for a change."

He ended the day at a fine rally in Columbus, featuring Miss Columbus, pom-pom girls, and an amputee with a chestful of decorations singing "The Star-Spangled Banner." "What all this comes down to," Clinton shouted, "is whether you believe we all go up or down together. . . . We've had 12 years of do your own thing, take care of yourself, and it's like to killed us. . . . We're all in this together."

In two days, he picked up two bad vibes: the first in the Italian restaurant, where a tipsy woman at the bar joked that she was one of his girlfriends; the second just before the game of eight-ball, when a young man in a pony tail shook Clinton's hand and introduced himself as "John—a Vietnam veteran."

It is easy to see why Bill Clinton has impressed so many Democratic politicians, so many reporters, and many voters. His most obvious advantage is his energy. Paul Tsongas keeps banker's hours, but Clinton goes all day and into the night, and likes it. He also seems truly to like the people he meets. Not all politicians do. George Bush is plainly comfortable only with friends, while other pols like people only for the adoration they supply. Clinton enjoys making connections, however tiny. His impulsive stops to greet spectators are the despair of his motorcade, and in situations like the subway appearance, he will let 25 people flow past in order to make the sale to the skeptic he collared.

More important, Clinton seems genuinely interested in the ideas he espouses. In this, he is not unlike Jack Kemp, who, if you run into him in a men's room, will lecture you about tax rates in Nicaragua. I ran into Clinton the night after the visit to Stone Mountain, in the gift shop of the hotel we were staying in. I said something about boot camps, and he took up the subject for a couple of minutes. I did not feel it was a performance, or only a performance. If the man is pushing boot camps, or apprenticeships, or tax credits, he wants to tell you why.

But it's also easy to see, from the perspective of the road, why Clinton has had such trouble sweeping all before him. His difficulty is greater than adultery or draft dodging—stories which the press, having feasted upon, has now cleared briskly from the table, even as in 1984 it first raised, then squelched the story of John Zaccaro's links to the Gambino family. Drunks and pool players may remember the Clinton dirt, but the press has decided that where Clinton slept and how he shirked is no longer news fit to print. Clinton's problem rather is political and intellectual. He has ideas in abundance; what he doesn't have is a compelling explanation of how they all fit together.

My brief summary of assorted Clinton appearances makes them seem far more coherent than they were. Apart from scattered applause lines and his evident enthusiasm, most of what Clinton says in public comes across as baffling and boring. His standard approach to any question is to begin by saying, "There are three things we should do about that." (Sometimes he prefaces this by reciting three things he has done in Arkansas.) Clinton has 47 positions on the issues of the day, but there is no way of knowing what his 48th position will be, or where it will come from. As far as his audiences are concerned, Clinton has as big a vision problem as George Bush.

Now, it must be said that Clinton thinks he has a vision. His favorite capsule formulation of it is "opportunity with responsibility," which is his "I owe you, you owe us" pledge: America will guarantee certain opportunities, in return for which Americans will agree to do or not do certain things. In this, Clinton is plugged into the same currents that are generating the intellectual fashion known as "the new communitarianism"—an attempt to replace a liberalism of rights and privileges, based ultimately on the prescriptive force of need, with a liberalism of duties and mutual obligations. It is an old American theme, traceable to John Winthrop's sermon, preached on board the *Arbella*, "A Modell of Christian Charity," of which Ronald Reagan liked to quote the phrase "a city upon a hill," but which also exhorted Puritan proto-Americans to attend to "the preservation and good of the whole." This is the source of Clinton's rhetorical flourishes, though one thoughtful Clinton-watcher, *New York* magazine's Joe Klein, has accused him of watering the message down in the heat of the campaign.

But perhaps there is a problem with the message itself. Such all-encompassing nets of duty can hold for religious communities—monasteries, the Massachusetts Bay Colony—but when the sense of divine rule relaxes, so do the nets. Communitarians then fall back on liberalism as we know it—and Bill Clinton calls for no sacrifice more serious than losing a driver's license, unless it's by the unworthy rich, whom he demonizes as "Wall Street."

Clinton came out of the South with more than enough to keep him going. He was already talking about March 17, and its contests in Michigan and Illinois, as his moment of decision, and he may yet win the nomination. But 47 positions and the new communitarianism probably aren't enough to beat even George Bush. □

The Boys on the Bus

WILLIAM McGURN

SAVANNAH

SHERMAN may have spared this city the worst during his terrible march through Georgia, but we members of the press covering the GOP primaries appear to be making up for anything the Yankees missed. Late this Sunday evening at the Holiday Inn, the simultaneous arrival of four dozen reporters, cameramen, and sound specialists reduced the lone check-in clerk to tears. The absence of a hotel bar led to a search party's being dispatched to ferret out potential watering holes. "Hey," said one weary soul, giving voice to a rising apprehension, "I hope it's not one of *those* counties."

This is the team assigned to follow Pat Buchanan on his own march

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through the South, and most of these poor devils have spent the previous week riding through Georgia on an old Greyhound bus dubbed "Asphalt One." I joined midway through, and because there are always more people and equipment than seats there was a debate on whether one of the remaining slots should be taken by me or another passenger's cameras. The irrepressible Greg Mueller, Buchanan's press secretary, sided with me. But there was strong sentiment for the cameras, and I have to think that though I won the seat I lost something in the comparison.

But it was well worth the effort, if only to see how the Buchanan phenomenon is playing out on the ground. White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater has characterized the challenger as appealing to "the instincts of hate and divisiveness," but if so Buchanan is doing a lousy job of it. There may well be the dark side everyone is talking about, but that is not what people are responding to. Everywhere he spoke the theme was the same: "George Bush has abandoned the heart and soul of the Republican Party, and we can turn this little rebellion into a middle-class revolution that will take this party back." Even a few days of watching Buchanan play this theme with his crowds is more than enough to understand that he connects with people in a way that Reagan used to do and that only Bill Bennett matches today.

In an odd way this is reflected in the press corps. At each stop they trundle off the plane, duly record the stinging attacks on the liberal Washington establishment (of which they are a prominent part), and reboard the plane with the usual banter and goodwill. Occasionally one or two might whisper astonishment at some quotations their home offices had dug up from a Nexis search of old columns—that he believes in God and the outdated concept of right and wrong, that he holds homosexuality unnatural, that he still thinks the Clean Air Act of 1990 was unnecessary—but by and large they get along. Partly this is because he always gives them good copy, but equally important is that they sense a genuineness and a sense of humor totally devoid of personal animosity. Of course, there's always the awkward moment when someone starts to lead the crowd in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance or singing "God Bless America" and they have to decide whether to stand or sit.

This is not to say that there aren't certain distortions. Because of the charges leveled against Buchanan, unpleasant stories are magnified while more interesting ones are ignored. In Atlanta, about two dozen Jews protested a Buchanan rally with such signs as "Pat = Defender of Nazis" or "Pat = Duke Without the Sheets." Certainly this is news. But it seemed to me equally newsworthy the next day when black children in the audience at Florence Christian School in South Carolina, about 10 per cent of the crowd, were cheering him with the rest; fourth-grader Alex Dejon, who had been waving a Buchanan placard, told me he supported Buchanan "because of what he said on abortion. I like that." Granted, this was not characteristic; outside the press entourage there were virtually no blacks at most of his stops. But the Atlanta protest, the only one of its kind, was equally unrepresentative. Is there any doubt that had those schoolchildren been white supremacists instead of black Christians they would have been on all the networks?

In other words, the story that everyone is missing has less to do with Pat Buchanan than the people Pat Buchanan reaches. Having tracked the news reports and columns, I half expected to find goose-stepping mobs and burning crosses. But the crowds coming out to see Pat Buchanan are not wearing white sheets or egging him on to stick it to Israel (indeed, every time the subject came up it was raised by fundamentalists who strongly support Israel and are concerned by his criticisms). If the exit polls are to be believed, only a fraction of those who voted for him were even motivated by his attacks on quotas.

Most typical were people whose favorite personality is Rush Limbaugh and who refer to Buchanan as "Pat." They are nice folks, like the man at the Ramada Renaissance victory party who said he didn't know much about politics but he knew something was wrong when he heard a 14-year-old girl on the radio complaining that she could get free condoms at her school, but she didn't have the freedom to pray at a football game. Or Dee Cox, who showed up at Brunswick Airport in a polka-dot dress with four cute kids and a lemon cake she gave to Pat. Asked what attracted her to Buchanan, she's clear and to the point. "Down here," she says, "we're real concerned about family, abortion, and keeping your word."

Exactly. Which is why the President's "apology" was so blockheaded. For most of these people, their beef with President Bush's 1990 budget deal was not a reduced paycheck (though Buchanan did visit a boat factory in Valdosta that saw some 250 people laid off because the luxury-boat tax reduced production of their biggest boat by 92 per cent). The real anger over the budget deal is moral. Under Ronald Reagan the cutting of tax rates

Mr. McGurn is NR*'s Washington Bureau Chief.*

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was popular not only because it gave taxpayers a break but because it signaled that in the battle between Us out here and Them up there in Washington, the Republicans were fighting for Us. When Bush broke that pledge, and then committed his whole Administration to defending his apostasy up until primary day in Georgia, he established himself as a Them.

The White House crew still haven't got this into their heads, and they keep attacking Buchanan in a way that only confirms the suspicion that Bush is an unregenerate Them. I often wonder what would have been the response if, after Buchanan's stunning show in New Hampshire, George Bush had come out and said, "Well, Pat ran a gallant race, and you know we have these family squabbles every four years. That's what Republican primaries are about. But I'm counting on Pat Buchanan's full support when we go up against the Democrats." That would have been a classy way of saying "I won" while retaining a presidential loftiness and fatherly concern for the party. Instead, he issued a cold statement and reminded everyone that according to the rules of arithmetic anything over 50 per cent wins.

This same miscalculation marks the President's use of surrogates and TV ads. Now, "negative" ads are a part of political life, and the ad with former Marine Commandant P. X. Kelley saying he took Pat Buchanan's positions on the Gulf personally and the other ad quoting a 1983 Buchanan column saying that women were "less equipped psychologically" to last in the workplace were legitimate. But that doesn't mean they were wise. Certainly the latter ad contributed to the 75 to 25 vote for Bush among GOP women in the Georgia primary. But Bush is on the same end of the gender gap as every other Republican presidential candidate, which means that his extra margins in GOP primaries are provided by people who won't necessarily vote for him in November. Ditto with the charges of "hate" and "racism" over Buchanan's attacks on quotas. The press will have a field day crying "hypocrisy" come autumn, when Bush will be essentially forced into running the same campaign against the Democratic nominee that Buchanan is now running against him.

The worst of it is that the personal attacks on Buchanan threaten Bush's ability to court the voters he will need in the general election. Before the Southern primaries, Buchanan appeared on *Brinkley* and all but said he would pull out if his figures started dropping and the perception was that all he was doing was helping the Democrats. Instead of taking this as an olive branch, Sam Skinner the next day went down to the *Washington Times* to accuse Buchanan of anti-Semitism, and more personal attacks followed. Relaxing between stops at a hotel room in Charleston, Buchanan expresses disbelief at the reaction. "When they call you an anti-Semite, when someone else starts taking about 'fascism,' and another calls you Know-Nothing, you don't exactly get up in the morning and say to yourself, 'Now how can I help George in the fall?' "

In the long run, this kind of campaign may destroy Buchanan, aided, to be sure, by the challenger's unwillingness to help his would-be defenders by at least saying that he never meant to imply many of the things attributed to him. In human terms this would be a tragedy, because virtually all who know Patrick J. Buchanan first-hand, even those from the opposite side of the ideological divide, know him to be a decent man.

If there's a political price to pay for this, however, it will be borne not by Pat Buchanan but by George Bush. The President has no serious challenge to his renomination; this, after all, is the party that nominated Gerald Ford in 1976. But a Republican base alone won't carry the day in November, and of all the crossover Democrats, angry independents, and disaffected conservatives who are casting their votes for Buchanan in these primaries, somewhere between a third and half are saying they will not vote for Bush in November. Even Buchanan concedes that absent some strong changes from the Administration, he could not guarantee to deliver these people to Bush even if he wanted to. In the Macon Airport I ask a Buchanan supporter in his late fifties if he could really vote for a Bill Clinton, or if Sam Skinner wasn't right when he told the Heritage Foundation that people like him had no place else to go. "He might be right," the man conceded. "But we might do what most folks do when they have no place to go. We might just stay home." □

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Return to Thailand

THOMAS JEFFERSON GOES EAST

Thailand shows that Jeffersonian self-government works. Now, if only America would give it a try.

CHARLES MURRAY

I FIRST arrived in Thailand in September 1965, a skinny 22-year-old, and stayed for six years. I married there. My first child was born there. In many of the most important ways, I grew up there.

I went to Thailand from Harvard as I had gone to Harvard from Newton, Iowa. Both were about as far as I could get from where I was, and in those days I had what the Peace Corps psychologist told me was a "high need for change." I was talking to a Peace Corps psychologist because I had joined up. I was a Volunteer attached to the Village Health and Sanitation Project.

Joining the Peace Corps wasn't any kind of personal homage to JFK, nor was I much of an idealist (well, neither was Jack, it turns out). I was out to see the world and have adventures. I had idolized Kennedy, however, and, like everyone I knew in college, I took for granted that Kennedy was smarter than Eisenhower and his ideas were better. Indeed, the lesson of history seemed to be that the people in one generation always were successfully debunked by the people who followed them, and that to cling to an old idea when a new one had become available was foolish. I have an especially sharp memory of reading Bill Buckley's line about standing athwart the tide of history yelling "Stop!" and wondering how a man of his intelligence (which I conceded reluctantly) could say such a thing.

Thailand changed all that. It happened slowly over the six years, only two of which were spent in the Peace Corps, but I can remember precisely when it began. I had been assigned to an office in a northern town called Lampang, and I was sitting at my desk killing time. So was everyone else in the office. The name of the place was impressive—The Regional Center of the Village Health and Sanitation Project—and we were supposedly doing something that was important in the grand scheme of rural development. My Thai co-workers were nice fellows, and I was at least smart enough to recognize that they knew more about sanitation and Thai villages than I did. But the business of the office, privy-building and well-drilling, proceeded at a pace so desultory that you needed time-lapse photography to realize anything was happening. Sitting there daydreaming, I had a vision of thousands and thousands of such program offices all over the world, with people just sitting there. It was an epiphany of sorts. At the time, I thought it applied only to developing countries. When I began working with American social programs a decade later, it didn't take long to realize it applied just as much to the United States. There are exceptions. Drop in on almost any kind of free curative health-care program, and you'll probably find a busy waiting room. But drop in unannounced on all sorts of other fine-sounding government programs—to help pregnant teenagers or drug addicts or youthful offenders or the chronically unemployed—and, whether it is in Thailand or Kenya or Cleveland, chances are you'll find some pleasant people sitting around not doing much of anything.

That epiphany was the first of many. Rural Thailand, where there was no clutter to get in the way, was a wonderful place to see how the world works. It became both a touchstone and a prism for identifying and thinking about what is important. Just about everything I have ever written is grounded in the experiences of those six years. And I came to love the place.

Now, more than a quarter of a century after I first arrived, I am back. There have been some visits in the in-

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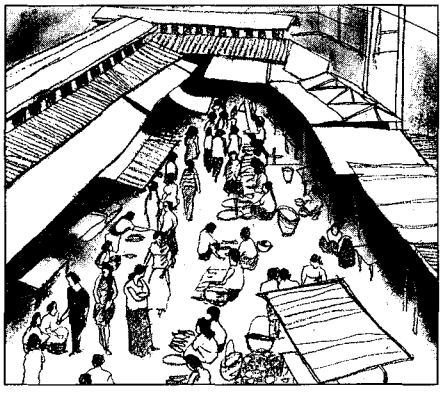
terim. But this time I am going to go back to villages I haven't seen for twenty years and more.

In the Villages

I AM IN Ban Bunnak in the far north, and it is my first day in the villages. I feel shy and middle-aged and out of place, and also a little shaky from a bout with stomach flu that came on me during the two-day drive north from Bangkok.

Every visit to a village runs its own random course if you give it a chance. You just park the car and start to walk. Most of the houses are empty during the day this time of year (late August), because most of the adults and teenagers are out in the paddies transplanting rice from the seedbeds, but there are always a few people sitting on porches, or shopkeepers outside their stores, or a group of villagers shooting the breeze. You walk, and people peer at you, wondering who the *farang* is. You smile and say hello, and it goes from there.

That's how it used to work, and today I find that it still does. After half an hour ambling through village streets, I head up a lane toward the school; a motorcycle passes me, and the driver stops to inquire who I am. He turns out to be the assistant headmaster, and an hour later I am invited to his home for lunch.



His home is a two-story house, white plaster over masonry, with wood-framed, glassed-in windows. Wrought-iron lamps flank the driveway. The doors of the house are made of heavy teak, elaborately carved. Objectively, it is about the size of an ordinary house in a working-class American neighborhood. But looking through my eyes, this was like going back to my Iowa home town and finding that someone had built a Newport mansion next door to my parents. Thai villages simply did not have any houses like this twenty years ago. Prosperous villagers built wooden houses and the poor built mat houses. Being rich by village standards meant that a person might have a wood house that was a little larger than the average and had wooden shutters for the windows. But nothing like this. What's more, Ban Bunnak has many houses like this—brick houses with gables and balconies, gaily decorated homes with expensive touches. There are cars and small trucks parked in many of the compounds, and a motorcycle in just about all of them. Television aerials are everywhere. In other words, the first village I happen to revisit, a village that I remember as being a run-of-the-mill northern village, is orders of magnitude richer than any village I have ever seen.

Oh yes, the lunch. The main course is *laab lyat*, a dish I had heard about but had never actually been served. It is raw beef chopped with a cleaver until it is the consistency of steak tartare. The meat is then mixed with coriander, mint, peppers, and fermented fish sauce, and served bathed in its own blood. The beverage is moonshine rice whisky in the vicinity of 100 proof, served neat. It is my first food since the stomach flu yesterday. I start cautiously. But everything is delicious, and trichinosis is only in pork. I think.

I discover over lunch that four of those splendiferous houses are owned by a Frenchman, a Swiss, a German, and an American. Each of these gentlemen has acquired a wife, or at least a significant other, from the village and built her a house. It would have been unseemly for me to inquire too closely, but the best guess is that the women had met these men in the nightclubs and bars of Bangkok.

Since I've brought it up, I might as well get it out of the way, because I have arrived at the topic everybody thinks of in connection with Thailand. Since the days of the Vietnam War, when five thousand American troops were coming to Bangkok for R&R every five days, Thailand has had the reputation of having the most affordable, attractive, and friendly prostitutes in the world. By the early 1970s, 747s were landing at Don Muang International Airport filled with Japanese and German men on what can only be described as sex tours. Within a few years, sprawling beach resorts had metastasized in sleepy little towns on the Gulf of Siam. Package deals made it cheaper for Europeans to take their seaside vacation in Thailand than on the Mediterranean, and tourism boomed.

Let me choose my words carefully here. There are certainly some awful aspects to the sex industry in Thailand. Young women are often lured out of villages with promises of respectable employment in Bangkok and then sold into brothels. Child prostitution exists, despicable beyond words. And even at their most innocuous, the bars of Bangkok have a sordid side. But there was also a non-sordid side when I was familiar with the bar scene back in the Sixties. In a country where a single sexual slip as a teenager converted you from a good girl to a bad girl, many women who worked in the better Thai nightclubs and bars were nothing more complicated than attractive and interesting women who had made that single slip and ended up in the business *faute de mieux*. They made good money and kept it—pimps were rare. They could be choosy about whom they slept with and on what terms. And there really were a lot of them with hearts of gold, as some of my penniless Peace Corps colleagues found. For a young single man in the 1960s, Thailand could be very like paradise.

On arriving in Bangkok this time I visited Pat Pong Road, now internationally notorious. It is a little harder-edged than it used to be, perhaps, though the girls I talked to seemed about the same as the girls I used to know. But a specter hangs over Pat Pong. Some large proportion of these young women are HIV posi-

ILLUSTRATIONS BY: CHANG PARK

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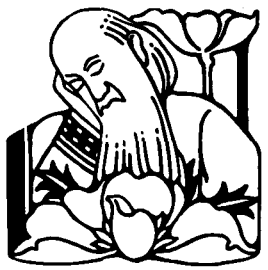

Faith and Intelligence:

Are They Compatible?

Among the well-educated the myth still circulates that religion is the preserve of the dim-witted, unlettered, and irrational. Yet recently *The New York Times Magazine* carried an article on the "return to religion" among intellectuals. From the Ivy League to Vanderbilt to Stanford, and among inquisitive people generally, there's an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This fascination is largely a result of the failures of secular substitutes for religion (such as positivism, hedonism, technological utopianism, egotism, Freudianism, and Marxism) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: goodness, suffering, justice, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

The *Times* article discussed the NEW OXFORD REVIEW as part of this return to religion, and rightly so. We at the REVIEW are spearheading today's intellectual engagement with what Daniel Bell terms "the sacred." Among other things, we scrutinize the religious dimensions of the great events and issues of the past and present, and probe the wisdom offered not only by the Bible and Church fathers, but also by such diverse giants as St. Francis, Aquinas, Dante, Thomas More, Kierkegaard, Newman, Dostoyevsky, Chesterton, Bonhoeffer, Eliot, Silone, Maritain, Niebuhr, Solzhenitsyn, Dorothy Day, C.S. Lewis, Martin Luther King Jr., Flannery O'Connor, Simone Weil, Mother Teresa, Graham Greene, Malcolm Muggeridge, and Pope John Paul II.

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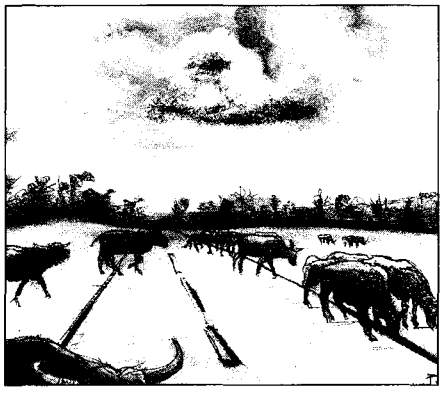
tive. Some think the HIV infection rate in Thailand is already approaching central African levels.

And yet in the villages, AIDS is not even on the horizon. I didn't find anyone who knew anyone who had AIDS, nor anyone who expressed any concern about it. The infection began spreading so recently that hardly anyone has died yet, and it is therefore difficult to persuade the average Thai to get excited. I notice the same reaction in myself—AIDS is still so invisible that I find myself thinking the Western blowhards have gotten it wrong again. But too much of the data looks solid to feel that way for long, and I often wonder whether I am seeing Thailand in the last years before a cataclysm.

Highways and Hayek

ON THE ROADS in upcountry Thailand, you can forget about cruise control. Bicycles, ten-wheel trucks, motorcycles, water buffalo, children walking to school, the occasional oxcart, and tractors share the road with you at speeds ranging from a snail's space to 150 kilometers an hour. And the dogs. Thai dogs seem to have some weird anti-evolutionary gene that leads them to cross roads directly in front of onrushing cars. Then there's the tendency of Thai drivers to pass on hills and curves.



Many Westerners don't like to drive in this environment. For some reason, I've always loved it, despite coming within inches of getting killed a few times. But this peculiar taste of mine aside, Thai driving habits have always struck me as being, on the whole, sensible. The Thai highway, far from being a Hobbesian battleground, is a network of Hayekian communication. Some of this is self-defense, as in blinking one's lights to make sure that the other fellow knows you will collide presently unless he gets back in his lane. But much is cooperative. Turn signals are used by the vehicle in front of you to let you know that it is safe to pass, for example. And often one will ease over onto the shoulder to make room for the other guy. In America, being forced to the shoulder is an occasion for furious honking and rude gestures. Not so in Thailand. After all, what are shoulders for, if not to be used?

The Water-Buffalo Question

I AM chatting with the prosperous headman of Ban Klang, asking about the new contraption I keep seeing in the villages of Lomsak district. It is a motorized water buffalo—that's its name, *kwai lek*, meaning "little water buffalo." The farmer walks behind it guiding it by its long metal arms, just as he did the plow yoked to his water buffalo, while it chugs along on fat wire wheels that can maintain traction in a flooded paddy. A *kwai lek* costs about 30,000 *baht* new, I am told, roughly $1,200.

In the wealthier villages of Lomsak, the water buffalo have nearly disappeared. Yes, the headman agrees, the change is dramatic. There aren't more than twenty buffalo left in Ban Klang, where ten years ago there may have been two hundred. I am dismayed. What can Thai village life be like without water buffalo? Better, he says. For one thing, it is a lot easier to be a headman than it used to be. Why? Mainly, he says, because there are no more water-buffalo thieves.

As soon as he says it, I know what he means. Water buffalo have traditionally been the most valuable property in a Thai village and are easier to steal than you might think. Water-buffalo thieves have therefore been a big problem. The performance of the district officials of the Royal Thai Government used to be judged largely on how well they caught them. Years ago, I knew one district officer who was the hero of his district because—the villagers said, I think mistakenly—he disposed of water-buffalo thieves by having them sewn in a sack and thrown in the Mekong River.

So it makes sense that as the water buffalo disappear, the village becomes easier to govern. But I catch myself resisting the idea. I am in danger of becoming one of those self-indulgent people who see developing cultures as quaint and want to keep them that way so they don't become prey to all the evils of twentieth-century American civilization. I have unconsciously assumed that the spread of modernity is going to ruin the things I most value about Thai villages—and it ain't necessarily so.

It's not just the water buffalo. In every village I visit I raise the same question in different ways: Has anything changed in the way the villagers get along with each other? In the way the village runs its affairs? And in every village, I get the same answer: It's gotten better. I hear many reasons. The villagers are now better educated, one headman tells me, and so now they are more open to innovations. In several places, I am told that the government officers in the district town are much more sensitive to the villagers' wishes. And everywhere, there's lots more money in the village, which opens up the options for doing things.

I should have reread my own books before I left for Thailand. One of the main points in *In Pursuit* is that Jeffersonian democracy could still work in the United States if we gave it a chance. Modernity doesn't *have* to mean that traditional mechanisms deteriorate; it can mean that they get better and more practical. Technology can make it easier for people to work where they live, easier for them to take more control over their children's education, easier for a central government that is so inclined to decentralize its own institutions.

Therein lies the problem, of course. When was a central government ever inclined to decentralize its own institutions? And that is the ineluctably destructive effect of modernity—political, not technological. Central

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governments hate the idea that someone out there is taking care of business without their help. Progressive thinking in Bangkok is currently embracing a number of plans for reforming local government, all in the villagers' best interests, and (surprise!) all in ways that take power away from the village and give it to higher authority. There is a move afoot to give the national Thai police force direct responsibility for the informal law enforcement functions traditionally handled by village headmen. The government wants to give the provincial governor power to make the final choice of headman, who may or may not be the person nominated by the villagers themselves. And so on.

Each reform has its rationale. There is always a rationale for the wrong-headed things that governments do. But it is tinkering of the most dangerous sort. Thailand never had a Jeffersonian intellectual legacy that told them how to do it, but, out of a heritage all their own, the Thais evolved something very close to a Jeffersonian system, and it has worked wonderfully even as countries around them—Laos, Cambodia, Burma—have cannibalized their own societies. And now Thailand, having repelled Maoism at its borders in the 1960s and 1970s, is in the 1990s about to fall prey to the "let's have the government take care of it" mentality of the New Deal.

Late August is transplanting time in Thailand, when the densely packed rice seedlings form blocks of emerald so bright they almost hurt your eyes. I am driving back from Ban Klang toward the mountains that line the western horizon. Jumbled banks of clouds sweep in from them, a palette of grey and pearl and silver, moving fast, with the rain falling in misty sheets on the mountainsides in the distance and shafts of sunlight stage-lighting the foreground and its gleaming blocks of green. No wonder I once thought that I could never leave.

The Transformation of Kaew Pat Pong

I WORKED just about everywhere in Thailand at one time or another, but it was the Northeast, flat and dry, unspeakably hot in the dry season, flooded in the rainy season, dirt poor, where I returned again and again. I go back an especially long time with Kaew Pat Pong, a village of 150 households tucked into the far northeastern corner of Thailand.

Kaew Pat Pong was the sad sack of villages. The headman was a dithering, fearful fellow who couldn't even deal with a chicken thief (it was one of his relatives). The village was desperately poor, growing barely enough rice to feed itself. It was also extremely isolated, with nothing but a hand-cleared track to connect it with the highway four kilometers away. But Kaew Pat Pong had its endearing qualities. The villagers coped even as they bitched about their incompetent headman, and they were welcoming and generous to my little research team. So I went back to Kaew Pat Pong with fond memories and great curiosity.

The place is transformed. Kaew Pat Pong has struck it rich in the most fundamental of senses: its people have created an economy that is a step beyond subsistence.

There is a generous scattering of two-story houses, not quite as elaborate as in Chiang Rai and Lomsak, but very nice. In 1968, the only "store" was a house that had a few bottles of warm Pepsi Cola to sell. Now, I have a dozen small shops to choose from, selling everything from medicines to boom boxes. In 1968, I couldn't have reached the village at this time of year in anything less than a Land Rover. Now, I watch as a little bus from the district town passes through on its thrice-daily service. There is still no electricity in Kaew Pat Pong, but the lines are scheduled to arrive next year. And the village sprouts with TV aerials anyway, connected to battery-operated sets.

Where did all the money come from? Some from cassava, which has recently become a lucrative cash crop, but most of it comes from Singapore. Several years ago, one of the village boys went to work in Bangkok. He learned of a contractor who was recruiting construction workers to go to Singapore, and he signed up; much of Kaew Pat Pong has been going to Singapore ever since. More than a hundred of the village's young men are at this moment working in Singapore.

The company pays their transportation and provides them a place to stay (usually a barracks-like affair). Most of them manage to clear about 40,000 *baht* a year to send back to their families in the village, and that is one hell of a lot of money in Kaew Pat Pong. This turns out to be a standard practice in the Northeast. Other villages send their sons to the oil kingdoms of the Middle East. Some people go on their own to Europe or the United States. I run into one fellow who was a bellhop for seven years on the Las Vegas strip and whose sister is still there, having opened a Thai restaurant with part of his savings.

Is this a good thing or a bad thing? Is it an admirable example of bootstrap wealth creation or is it exploitation of poverty-stricken peasants? There's no doubt about it in the opinion of the villagers: it's a very good thing. Few seem upset about the separations it causes. I came across a shop in Kaew Pat Pong with eight sewing machines going full tilt making windbreakers for a clothing jobber. A woman was running the operation, which had been financed by her husband in Singapore. When was he coming back? He was just here last spring, she said. When would she see him again? Oh, maybe a year, maybe two. She was not visibly brooding. Nor did any of the men who had been on such journeys

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have any comment on how tough it had been. Most talked about it as an adventure.

Thai culture has a lot to do with this attitude—Thai young men have always been expected to get the wanderlust out of their systems in their late teens, then come back to the village to settle down. But what Thai villagers are doing today is not so different from what American men have done, whether they were New England whaling men going out on a three-year voyage, or Scotch-Irish farmers leaving their families behind while they went to the California gold fields, or African-American sharecroppers taking a bus to Chicago to look for a factory job while the wife and children stayed back in Mississippi.

As I hear about the Singapore connection I am struck by an antic notion. Suppose I were to go back to the States and write an op-ed piece in which I proposed a federal jobs program wherein the unemployed young men of America's inner cities would be given the same opportunity that the young men of Kaew Pat Pong are getting. The core thought would be that it is reasonable for unemployed young men to pack up and take a job, any job, a thousand miles away, live in barracks, and be away from home for a year or two, during which time they would be expected to save their small salaries to take back to their families. My adversaries in the policy debate would find this approach horrifyingly Dickensian. Most of them think it cruel and unreasonable to expect the inner-city unemployed to spend two hours on public transportation to get to a job site in the suburbs. Even my allies would think I had gone round the bend.

I am not trying to minimize the real hardships of the Singapore arrangement, or for that matter the real hardships of spending four hours a day on public transportation. The question is, which is better *for the people involved*? That degree of hardship or staying at home, unemployed? I am not referring to long-range economic self-interest, but the most fundamental sources of human satisfaction. I don't think there can be any doubt about the answer. The underlying meaning of "earning a living"—earning one's *life*—is at the heart of human happiness. And yet it is politically inconceivable that American public policy will again be premised on this understanding, as it was just thirty years ago.

I have seen very few *kwai lek* in the Northeast. They're too expensive, I am told. Also, Northeasterners are not yet convinced that a machine is better than a water buffalo. For one thing, you can't eat it.

This morning in Kaew Pat Pong it abruptly occurs to me that it is *really* hot and *really* muggy. And so it is. For about 340 days out of the year, Thailand is as hot and muggy as Washington, D.C., is during the hottest, muggiest week of the year. But the thought comes and goes fleetingly, and this is one of the few times I have thought about the heat since I arrived. Why does heat that bothers me in Washington not bother me here? I decide that it is because Thais don't stand around saying "Hot enough for you?" and because weather forecasters aren't telling you morning and night, "Get ready for a real scorcher, folks." Hot weather is a classic example of being able to manufacture a problem that, in a very real sense, one may choose not to make a problem simply by ignoring it.

If We Hadn't Fought

THIS MORNING, on my way south toward Ubol, I take a trip over to Na Kae district. Na Kae was a famous name in the late 1960s and early 1970s—Thailand's only "liberated area," a place where the insurgents had more control over the population than the Royal Thai Government did.

I never worked in Na Kae. The embassy wouldn't let us, except for a few spooks, because the U.S. Government didn't want to start taking casualties in yet another Southeast Asian country. And whereas I yearned to be shot at and missed, I had recently had a friend killed in Laos doing much the same work I was doing, so I was content to follow policy.

But there's no insurgency any more, and I mosey around the back roads at will. I stop in a remote village and strike up a conversation with a storekeeper. Yes, lots of the village's youths had "gone into the jungle" during the insurgency, he says. But of course they had been back in the village for many years, where they worked the fields like everyone else.

We chat for a while, agreeing that it is nice that peace has returned. Still, he muses, those weren't such bad days in some ways. The village had gotten electricity back then. That was when the government had built the asphalt road into the village. "Now look at it," he says, pointing at the pitted and broken surface. He laughs. When the Communists left, so did all that development money.

Meanwhile, Laos is a basket case. In a village beside the Mekong, I am told that about a hundred Laotians fleeing the Pathet Lao government have crossed over and settled illegally in the village. They work as hired farm labor for the Thai villagers. Laotians still living in Laos sneak across the river, sometimes to sell marijuana for the consumer goods that are unobtainable in Laos, sometimes to steal. And still other Laotians living in Thailand sneak back into Laos to conduct unorganized guerrilla warfare against the Communists.

I look across the river at the line of mountains in the distance where the Ho Chi Minh Trail once ran. In 1968, I watched the flashes of the bombs over those

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mountains. I wondered then what I thought of the war, and I do to this day. The war was an American catastrophe, of course, the way we went about it. And yet I am not at all sure that Thailand wouldn't be another basket case, its 57 million people as miserable as the peoples of Laos and Vietnam and Cambodia, if it hadn't been for the war. I'm not sure it would be either, however, so I remain confused.

'I'm from the Government . . .'

HEADING SOUTH I arrive in Sam Kha. In 1968, when I first saw it, Sam Kha was being touted as a model of village development. The head of the Village Defense Group, a former schoolteacher, had turned out to be a village-level Thai version of Lyndon Johnson. He had organized that village like no other village I had ever seen. A new school was under construction, as was a health center and a town meeting hall. A cotton-growing project, a fish-pond project, an agricultural cooperative—you name it, this fellow had gotten it started. Visiting American VIPs were always taken to Sam Kha. My research team and I found our way there because our study was specifically intended to compare "low-input" with "high-input" villages, and Sam Kha was probably the highest-input village in the Northeast.

We stayed in Sam Kha for a month, and it was a month of revelations about the difference between what the government thinks is important and what villagers think is important, about the ways that showcase projects go wrong, about what happens when someone shows up saying, "I'm from the government, and I'm here to help you." Perhaps the most lasting lesson was that there needn't be villains in these stories. The fellow who had decided to take the village under his wing was genuinely well-meaning, enthusiastic, resourceful, and fairly honest—and what he did was take a village that had been running its own affairs reasonably well and emasculate it.

Tip O'Neill would later summarize some of the things I was beginning to understand when he said that "All politics is local." But Alexis de Tocqueville understood them even better when he wrote that "if you take power and independence from a municipality, you may have docile subjects, but you will not have citizens." For most people, life's center of gravity is family and friends, located in the surrounding geographic community, whether that community is a small farm town or a neighborhood in Cleveland. The vitally important determinant of "quality of life" is not how many goodies the community gets from Bangkok or Washington, but whether the community *works*—which crucially depends on individuals and families being engaged in the stuff of life in their community, which in turn depends on their being *responsible* for the stuff of life in their community. Sam Kha taught me that when I was 25. It also taught me how easily a well-meaning outside agency can destroy the fragile organism that is a functioning community.

On this trip, Sam Kha provokes another meditation, because, let's face it, Sam Kha is still extremely poor. In the other villages, poverty remains real, but movement is also real, and the fact that things are moving in a good direction elevates the spirit of local life. In Sam Kha, there is not much movement, and many people live on the edge of subsistence.

Why this is more true of Sam Kha than of Kaew Pat Pong is not clear. The land in Sam Kha is poor, but no poorer than the land in Kaew Pat Pong. Sam Kha has gotten much more in the way of economic and social infrastructure from the government than Kaew Pat Pong. The youths of Sam Kha are no less eligible for the jobs in Singapore and Bangkok and the Middle East than the youths of Kaew Pat Pong.

It would take me weeks to get to the bottom of it. The long and the short of it is that in Sam Kha, people are still behaving in the ways that have always and will always result in economic poverty, which is to say that almost everyone is engaged in subsistence farming. To ask why Sam Kha is poor is unnecessary. Poverty does not require an explanation. Poverty is what naturally happens when human beings try to scratch a living from the earth with their hands. The thing that requires explanation is the creation of wealth. That is the miracle, the aberration, the expression of something in the human spirit set free.

Thus the question of what to do for Sam Kha to remedy its poverty is presented much more starkly than in the United States. When one visits a poor community in the States, there is always the thought that America has enough money to make things right, if only we had the will. In Thailand, this kind of brute-force approach is financially out of the question. That being the case, what would one have the Thai government do to cure poverty in Sam Kha? Tax the people in Kaew Pat Pong who have gone to Singapore so that they can subsidize the people of Sam Kha who have been slower to pick up on the same opportunities? Give tax breaks to a pineapple canning factory so that it might open near Sam Kha (and thereby not locate near some other village that also could use the jobs)? Open a job-training center near Sam Kha (and thereby not near other villages where the villagers could also use the training)? One may run through the list of projects that might be tried to help Sam Kha, and in each case it is much more obvious than in the United States that Peter is being robbed to pay Paul, and it is not clear why Paul has a greater right to Peter's money than Peter does. It is also much more obvious that it is not possible to create opportunities "fairly," and instead that one of the few things—but a very good thing—the Thai government

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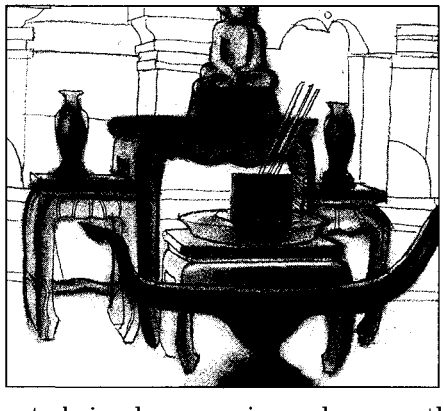
can do is to be a fair referee, enforcing basic ground rules, and thereby allow the people of Sam Kha to join in the opportunities around them. In other words, the Thai government can provide an environment in which as many people as possible are engaged in the process of creating wealth peacefully and noncoercively.

What the people of Sam Kha cannot do is limit their own economic behavior to subsistence farming and also become prosperous. They cannot have it both ways. Few in Sam Kha would argue with me on this question. I have yet to meet a subsistence farmer who thinks that the world owes him a tractor, however much he would like to have one. But I have a great deal of difficulty trying to make analogous points in the United States when I suggest, for example, that unmarried teenage girls cannot expect to have children and also become prosperous—that they too cannot have it both ways. In Thailand, the naturalness of poverty and the psychic energy that must go into the creation of wealth are both still visible, not swathed in the layers of national wealth that make them look like a matter of luck.

Mutual Respect, Mutual Obligations

SITTING BESIDE the pool at the hotel, I am back in Bangkok to end the trip. Last night I stayed in Korat, a bustling provincial capital about 250 kilometers out of Bangkok, and experienced an episode that defined the trip. I had gone out for dinner, and asked a salesgirl standing in the door of a fabric shop how to get to a particular restaurant I had in mind. She told me and I walked on. Three blocks later—busy, crowded blocks—the same girl suddenly appeared at my side, out of breath. She had realized that she'd given me the wrong directions. I should have gone the opposite way. She had chased me down to tell me.



Thais do this sort of thing frequently, and it gives the tourists stories to bring home about how sweet the Thai people are. But there are two catches to such sweet behaviors.

One is that, if you want to live in a society where people voluntarily run after you for three blocks, you also have to be prepared to run after them. When our Peace Corps group first got to Thailand in 1965, we found another Thai custom, whereby at restaurants one person always pays the bill for the entire table—*always*, with no discussion, and usually so discreetly that a newcomer doesn't even notice that it has happened. The opportunities for freeloading seemed wide open. But most of us also quickly discovered that every once in a while the Volunteer had better pick up the tab. No one would complain if he didn't. People would simply begin to exclude him. If you want to get the benefits of living in a society where people are nice to each other, you have to be nice too. And you have to do it voluntarily.

The second catch is that such behaviors do not flow from sudden, random impulses but rather from an underlying, coherent concept of virtue—for a Thai, a Buddhist understanding of how a virtuous person behaves. I doubt if many Thais could tell you the philosophical details of that understanding. It is not something that is taught in a college course. It is assimilated with mother's lullabies and childhood's numberless small tutorings and disciplines. But it is indeed a shared understanding, deeply understood. Its large effect is to produce the infinitely complex web of felt obligations and bases of mutual respect and motives for generosity that make up a civilized culture. One of its minor effects was to lead the salesgirl to behave as she did. Voluntarily. We in America had such a common understanding of virtue once, and it worked as well. And I suppose we can assume once again that Thailand is only temporarily lagging behind us. No doubt as Thailand becomes more advanced it too will decide that obligations aren't real unless they are legislated, that mutual respect must be mandated rather than earned, and that generosity must be codified in a tax system.

But you still have a few years to see what a quaint, traditional culture is like. And that is perhaps the most startling revelation of the trip. In an odd way, Thailand is more Thai today than it was a quarter-century ago. If Thai culture has started to deteriorate—the tourist centers aside—the signs eluded me. And the tourist centers themselves are remarkably compartmentalized. I spent 12 days upcountry, and in that entire time I didn't speak a sentence of English save for a few long-distance calls. I saw just a handful of foreigners, all of them in the two largest cities I visited. In 1970, I would have seen Americans in every provincial capital.

Even the floods of tourists in Bangkok mill about in only part of the city. The eastern half of Bangkok is transformed by high-rise office blocks and luxury hotels, the Pat Pong Road area is as sleazy as the travel articles tell you, and the area around the Grand Palace is jammed with tourist buses. But I spent an afternoon walking the northwest quadrant of the city, from near the old Peace Corps Headquarters south to the Ministry of Health and thence over to the boxing stadium, and I was walking the same streets I had walked years ago. The buildings were the same, the noises were the same, the smells were the same, the street life was the same. At the boxing stadium, I went to my favorite Northeast restaurant for broiled chicken and sticky rice. Halfway through the meal, I had the eerie realization that I had hardly any visual cues to tell me what year it was. As far as I could see—the other shops lining the street, the interior of the restaurant, the other customers, the waitresses giggling together in a corner—nothing told me it wasn't 1965. If I am a little bemused and disoriented as I prepare to get on the plane, it is not because I couldn't go home again, but because in so many ways I could. □

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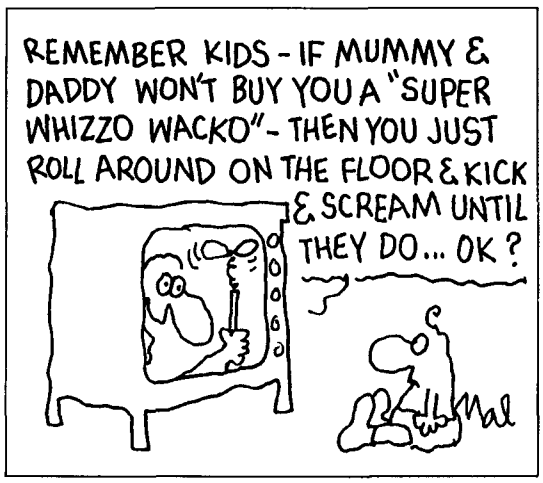
help


REMEMBER KIDS - IF MUMMY & DADDY WON'T BUY YOU A "SUPER WHIZZO WACKO" - THEN YOU JUST ROLL AROUND ON THE FLOOR & KICK & SCREAM UNTIL THEY DO... OK?
Mal
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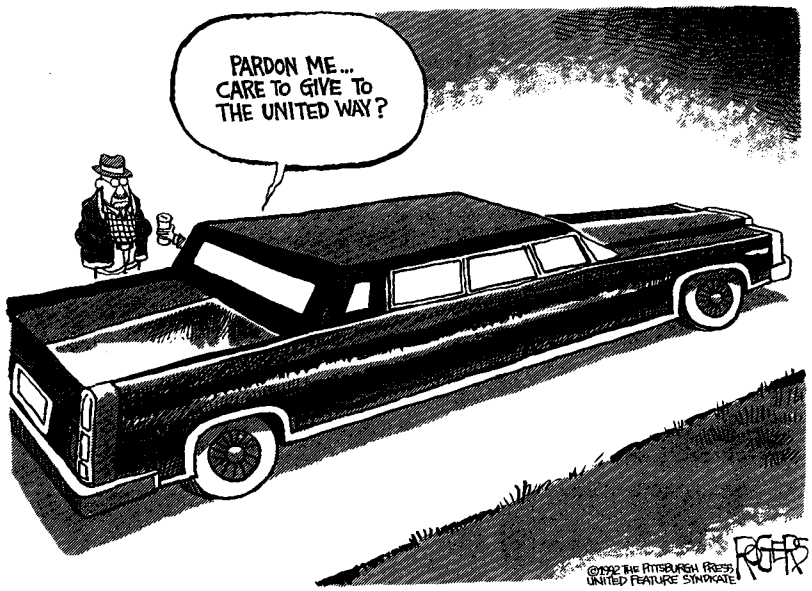

More Buttons and Stickers, Please

On parlor walls and Bossie's stall,
Where Reagan's photos once hung tall,
Mug shots of Mr. Bush are rare
As icebergs on the Delaware;
Nor are his bumper stickers seen
(The kind and gentle or the mean),
While buttonholes and pork-pie hats
Look pristine as Aunt Pittypat's.

W. H. VON DREELE

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"SPEND! SPEND! SPEND! BUY! BUY! BUY!"

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The Anti-Reagan Recession

HOW TO WRECK AN ECONOMY

Start by raising taxes, especially on real estate. Once you've got the real-estate market reeling, change the rules on banking. Add some expensive regulations—et voilà!

PAUL CRAIG ROBERTS

THE CURRENT economic stagnation, now three years old, has its origin in the charge that the Reagan tax cut of 1981 would fuel inflation. Liberal economists, such as Walter Heller, made this charge, but so did conservative economists. Expecting a worsening of the inflation of the 1970s, many investors sought refuge in real estate, a time-proven inflation hedge.

By 1986 it was apparent that inflation had collapsed, and many real-estate investments that had relied on inflation to make them good were turning sour. Just at the moment when a major pillar of U.S. wealth and the collateral behind hundreds of billions of dollars in loans was in line for a shake-out, the Federal Government enacted the 1986 Tax Reform Act.

The real-estate provisions in the act would have destroyed real-estate investments in sounder shape than many of ours were at that time. Depreciation schedules were lengthened from 19 years to 31, thus collapsing the present values of real-estate properties. The normal tax deductions were denied to "passive investors," causing them to walk away from investments. Finally, as if to make certain investors would not hold on for the long haul, the capital-gains tax rate was raised by 40 per cent. These tax-law changes were retroactive and did not exclude completed properties or properties under construction. Thus, an over-invested market was hit with punitive tax measures that destroyed the expected rate of return on real-estate investments. Soon large numbers of S&Ls and banks were collapsing, forcing taxpayers to pick up the multi-hundred-billion-dollar tab for deposit insurance. Insurance companies found their capital positions impaired by real-estate losses.

Real-estate troubles are not unique to the United States. Japan, France, England, and even Switzerland have real-estate problems. But only in the U.S. did the government allow declines in real-estate values to destroy financial institutions and wealth on a vast scale. Instead of helping troubled institutions to ride out the storm, the U.S. Government passed more punitive legislation, in the form of the 1989 S&L act, and unleashed regulators who promptly forced banks to write down even the values of loans that were meeting their payments.

Soon the financial system was paralyzed. Hardly anyone could get a loan, because shrinking collateral pushed capital/loan ratios down. Banks with low ratios that expand their lending risk being taken over by regulators.

The 1989 S&L act further hurt real estate because it concentrated hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of properties in the hands of the Resolution Trust Corporation, a government agency charged with selling the assets in order to recover some of the costs of the bailout. These properties hang like a sword over the real-estate market, suppressing values and lengthening the period of recovery.

Simultaneously, the government attacked the high-yield or "junk bond" market, making financing difficult for the majority of businesses that lack blue-chip credit ratings.

Hit It Again

BY DESTROYING the ability of the financial system to finance investment, the government's ill-considered policies adversely affected the economy's ability to continue growing. Not content with this damage, the government added more. It hit a faltering economy with a tax increase and major increases in regulatory costs. The Clean Air Act, Disabilities Act, and other regulations that have poured out of the Bush Administration force businesses to invest billions of dollars that do not produce a dime of profit. Consequently, the rate of return, or earnings, on fixed business investment has fallen.

The result is a contraction in fixed investment that is pushing the economy down to a permanently lower

Mr. Roberts, who was assistant secretary of the treasury for economic policy in 1981–82, currently holds the William E. Simon chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

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growth path. After the adjustment is completed, the economy will resume growing, but along a lower path that reflects a higher cost of capital. This transition is quite different from the recovery from a normal recession, in which the economy rebounds rapidly after business inventories and consumer debt are worked down.

The usual anti-recessionary policies designed to boost consumer spending cannot help an economy that is suffering from having too many investments whose earnings have been impaired by taxation and regulation. Pumping up consumer demand can instead drive up prices, as it did in the 1970s.

Neither the policy proposals of President Bush nor those emanating from the Democratic Congress address the economy's problems. The Democrats oppose Mr. Bush's proposal to cut the capital-gains tax on the spurious grounds that the rich would benefit. Mr. Bush himself seems to agree. He has structured the tax cut so that it takes away with one hand what it gives with the other, as Lawrence Kudlow has reported ["No New Tax Cuts," *NR*, March 2]. In Mr. Bush's proposal, capital gains become a "tax-preference" item subject to the alternative minimum tax (AMT). In effect, Mr. Bush's proposal to cut the capital-gains tax rate to 15 per cent is not real, because the AMT raises it back to 24 per cent.

When politicians say that they are not going to help the rich, they mean they are not going to help capital. Because the rich have more capital than the poor, some politicians believe that tax policies that help capital only help the rich. However, it is capital that creates jobs, and it is capital that makes workers more productive, thus raising their wages. When you hear a politician say that he is going to tax capital in order to help the poor, you know that you are listening to a dangerously uninformed person.

If Mr. Bush and the men and women in Congress would open their eyes, they would see that we are suffering an upper-class recession. It is the developers, bankers, and S&L owners who are being wiped out in droves. When General Motors closes plants, it gives workers severance pay. When multi-millionaire developers fall, the whole economy shakes.

Roberts's Law, to which there are no exceptions, states: "Whenever economic policy is driven by envy, ruin results." The 1986 Tax Reform Act is a prime example. The government said that by taking real-estate tax shelters away from the rich, we would raise $30 billion in new tax revenues that we could spend on educating our children, fighting crime, or reducing the budget deficit. Well, we took away the shelters, but we have not collected a dime of the $30 billion. Instead, we have shelled out somewhere between $200 and $500 billion to bail out the insured depositors in the S&Ls and banks we wrecked. In addition, we have paid for our envious behavior with an economy that has been dead in the water for three years.

"He's part of the solvent minority."

No matter how factual an account they might read, some people will remain convinced that the problem is debt. Those on the Left will blame tax cuts and greed, while those on the Right will blame the failure to cut government spending. There is absolutely no doubt that the U.S. national debt grew rapidly in the 1980s. Between 1980 and 1987 it more than doubled, but it also more than doubled during the 1970s. Indeed, during the 1940s the national debt quintupled. The U.S. came out of World War II with a national debt three times larger as a share of GNP than today's debt, but who would conclude that the U.S. economy died in the 1940s, murdered by debt? Today the U.S. national debt as a share of GNP stands where it did when John Kennedy was President.

During the 1980s the national debts of the Group of Seven industrialized countries more than doubled, with the exception of Germany's, which almost doubled. The growth of the U.S. national debt is equal to the average of the G-7 countries. Are our partners in the G-7 also paying the price of "excessive debt," "Reagan tax cuts," and "Reagan-era greed"? Of course not. Rather, the U.S. is paying the price for the anti-Reagan propaganda that has succeeded only in reversing the successful economic policies that reinvigorated our economy. □

Spring Thaw?

RUSSIA MEETS THE MARKET

The coalition against Yeltsin is building—but there are signs of hope on Gorky Street.

ELISABETH RUBINFIEN

BORIS YELTSIN left Moscow on March 3 for the seaside resort of Sochi—not to argue over the Black Sea fleet with Ukrainian leaders, but to take a Kennebunkport-style "working holiday."

Mr. Yeltsin's choice, not only to leave the capital but to go to the same shore where Mikhail Gorbachev was vacationing when the putschists' tanks rolled into Moscow, is a bold statement of confidence in the face of increasing criticism. "Patriots" may be calling for his resignation, newspapers

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may be predicting another coup attempt, and his own vice president may be demanding that he fire his economic SWAT team, but Boris Nikolayevich is standing firm.

So far with good reason. The harsh economic measures that have driven prices up more than three times overnight have not brought masses into the streets. Workers aren't striking, and with spring around the corner, even an increase in gas prices won't seem so bad. The mood in Moscow is one of watchfulness: things are clearly changing; let's see if they don't start getting better, and live off the stock in our pantries in the meantime.

But Mr. Yeltsin would do well to rest up and gather his strength for rougher times in April. Remaining controlled prices on staples and energy are due to be liberalized then. The ruble, which has recently strengthened, largely because of a simple shortage of hard cash at the banks, is expected to deflate once again with the release of newly printed 1,000-ruble notes. And a session of the Russian Congress of People's Deputies scheduled to begin April 6 is sure to be a grueling battle over whether to stay on the shock-therapy course.

The conservatives—as Russian parlance dubs those who prefer a system of centralized control—have a tailor-made rallying point in the chairman of the parliament (still called the Supreme Soviet), Ruslan Khasbulatov. He has lately joined Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoi in denouncing the program their president supports. Just one year ago at an extraordinary session of the Congress, Mr. Yeltsin withstood bids to oust him, drawing tens of thousands into the streets in his support. Now, with an even clearer mandate as a directly elected president, his popularity will continue to shield him from the conservatives.

But at the same time, Mr. Yeltsin is no longer the opposition underdog. Now it is he who is held responsible for deteriorating conditions. It remains to be seen whether he will be able to manipulate his Congress the way Mr. Gorbachev used to.

In either case, the calls for his ouster will get louder, as scattered groups of nationalists have started coalescing into a so-called "national patriotic movement." And not only will their noisy clamor nurture domestic discontent: it has started to take on a noticeably anti-Western tone that if allowed to continue cannot fail to irritate new Western allies.

A variety of conservative parties are uniting around the idea of reclaiming lost territory and rebuilding a Great Russia. They blame today's economic ills not on the imperial policies of the Soviet state but on the disintegration allowed under Mr. Yeltsin. Their methods for drawing the other 14 former Soviet republics back under the Kremlin's thumb range from economic terrorism to sweet talk. But the underlying message strikes a sympathetic chord amongst a people who feel embarrassed—and sometimes afraid—of where history has brought them.

Messrs. Rutskoi and Khasbulatov's moderate conservative line defines the so-called center-right. They call for slower economic reforms and more central controls, insist that a single military be maintained, and regret the fragmentation of the Soviet Union. Even well-known democrats such as St. Petersburg Mayor Anatoli Sobchak openly share those views. Cheering them on, however, are political leaders and groups as extreme as the anti-Semitic Pamyat group and the pro-Communist Soyuz alliance, which started out by opposing Mr. Gorbachev's more modest reforms.

The Hand That Freed Them?

THE DREAM of a Great Russia is coupled with resentment of the West and a firm conviction that Americans and Western Europeans are gloating over the collapse of Communism. Some go so far as to say the Soviet disintegration was all the result of an intricately designed Western plot. Today, they warn, Washington is pulling Moscow's strings.

"Look how [James] Baker acts like he's the Minister of the Interior, touring the nation," grumbled a young man in army fatigues, wearing a lapel button supporting "Nashi" (Ours), an extreme nationalist party, at a rally honoring a World War II hero whose remains were being returned from Latvia.

"Our policy is being written in the White House—but not the one in Moscow, the one in Washington," a middle-aged woman fiercely agreed.

Mr. Khasbulatov has directly attacked the International Monetary Fund, which is helping to guide the reforms of economic czar Yegor Gaidar. "We believe that it is incorrect to fulfill all the demands set forth by the IMF," Mr. Khasbulatov told a meeting of local and regional government leaders in St. Petersburg last month. "The IMF always proceeded and is proceeding now from the fact that it must secure the return of the moneys it had provided. These IMF schemes are unacceptable for our country, and I'll tell you frankly, the Supreme Soviet will firmly defend its stance as regards the IMF." Vladimir Isakov, another leading conservative parliament member, charges that Mr. Yeltsin is turning Russia "into the raw-material appendage of Western monopolies."

Most of these critics, however, carefully avoid attacking Mr. Yeltsin himself. They would rather win him over and put his great popularity to their own use. But Mr. Gaidar is equally determined to defend his stance. His team rejects the idea that Russia is a special case and insists that it will respond to the same economic laws that prevail in the West. So far he has been able to keep the main support he needs—Mr. Yeltsin's.

And so far, Mr. Yeltsin has been able to keep the support of most people. One reason may be that, haphazard and localized as it is, change is starting to be felt. Some Moscow stores have more products, albeit at prices five to ten times higher than people are used to. "All these years, while one program replaced another, the main thing for which the government was criticized was that they were talking while doing nothing," Mr. Gaidar said in a television interview March 1. "In this sense our government is different . . . and we are now criticized for doing what the previous governments have failed to do."

As the spring thaw comes to Moscow, a recent presidential decree is having a visible effect. The decree, allowing anyone to sell anything anywhere, has triggered an explosion of ad-hoc flea markets in Moscow. The phenomenon is at once poignant and heartening: along Gorky Street (now Tverskaya Street), once famous as Moscow's Fifth Avenue, dozens of grandmothers and young men each day form a line parallel to the exclusive foreign boutiques and bleak state

Miss Rubinfien is a Moscow correspondent for the Wall Street Journal.

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stores. One proffers an old pair of boots, another a bottle of homemade wine, a third the dribs and drabs of extra clothing she had at home.

Yet the other day my friend Lara told me optimistically, "My husband needed batteries and there's no hope of finding them in the store, but he got them on the street. You can get anything there now." □

Good-Bye to the Mob

THE LIBERATION OF THE TEAMSTERS

The much-misused RICO finally did what it was originally intended to do: clean up the Teamsters.

EUGENE H. METHVIN

"TONY, did you ever think we'd see the Soviet Union and the Teamsters Union come unglued in the same year?"

"No," Tony replied, "and I sure thought the Teamsters Union would outlast the other one."

It did—but by only a few days. On December 1, the Ukrainians voted themselves out of the Soviet Union, and one week later the Slavic republic presidents pronounced the union dissolved. Meanwhile 1.6 million Teamster rank-and-filers held their first free secret balloting, and voted themselves out of the Mafia-dominated Teamsters Union and into a new one with the same name but new faces. Reform candidate Ron Carey and his entire slate of 15 rebels swamped the Old Guard, only 3 of whom remained on the executive board. "It's good-bye to the Mafia," Carey proclaimed. "The members will come first."

Boris Yeltsin took power in the Kremlin on December 25. And Ron Carey took power in the Teamsters' marble palace at the foot of Capitol Hill on February 1.

Four Pulitzer Prize–winning journalists played key roles in the long story of the Teamsters' liberation. When I came to Washington 33 years ago the top story was the epic McClellan Senate Rackets Committee investigation. Two Portland *Oregonian* reporters were the lead-off witnesses. They had won a Pulitzer Prize for exposing an underworld plot to use Teamster money and muscle to penetrate their municipal government and monopolize the rackets. A third, Clark Mollenhoff of the *Des Moines Register & Tribune*, had won the 1958 Pulitzer for reporting on Jimmy Hoffa and his Mafia allies and thereby pointing Senator John McClellan and his investigators to paydirt. Mollenhoff understood that reporters are like bird dogs: they can point, but they can't shoot. That takes someone with the power to compel testimony, subpoena records, and prosecute wrongdoers.

Nearly 1,300 other witnesses followed in 250 days of televised hearings that transfixed the nation as mobsters and union racketeers paraded before the senators. John F. Kennedy was a member of McClellan's committee, and Robert F. Kennedy was chief counsel. McClellan was proud that his probe helped catapult them to the Presidency and Attorney Generalship.

But Senator McClellan was bitterly disappointed with Congress's response. In 1959 it passed the Landrum–Griffin Act, "the working man's bill of rights." But union lobbyists

Mr. Methvin, a Reader's Digest *senior editor, served on the 1983–86 President's Commission on Organized Crime and oversaw the staff investigation and preparation of its report on labor-management racketeering.*

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"knocked the teeth right out of it," McClellan declared. For example, union members were denied the right to go to federal court to challenge elections won by violence and fraud; only the Secretary of Labor, whose bureaucracy the unions heavily influenced through House and Senate labor and appropriations committees, could do so. In 1971 Senator Robert P. Griffin declared that the courts and bureaucrats had given the act bearing his name "far too narrow and restricted a construction" so that it had "fallen short of its aims."

McClellan retaliated by giving Uncle Sam a new set of teeth. He drafted and piloted onto the lawbooks the 1970 Organized Crime Control Act, which contained the famous Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) provisions. RICO's civil provision, he predicted, would assure the "wholesale removal of organized crime from our organizations and forfeiture of their ill-gotten gains."

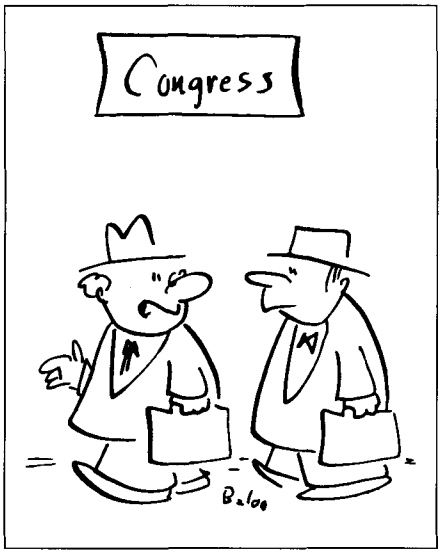
Unfortunately, the Justice Department's racketbusters were too habituated to criminal prosecutions to seize this new weapon. Only once in 15 years did they use civil RICO to remove gangsters from a union. In 1985 when they indicted the Mafia's ruling "commission," FBI Director William Webster said, "We had RICO for ten years before we knew what to do with it." In fact, they still did not know what to do with the civil RICO tools.

Beginning of the End

BUT THE prosecutors were soon to get a powerful prompting from my friend Tony Dolan. He helped set the stage for the downfall of both unions, the Soviet and the Teamsters. Tony won a Pulitzer Prize for exposing Mafia penetration of the unions, police, and city government in Stamford, Connecticut. He then became chief speechwriter for President Ronald Reagan and was prime draftsman of the "Evil Empire" speech. He also persuaded President Reagan to create the 1983–86 President's Commission on Organized Crime (PCOC), and thus set the stage for the Teamster liberation drama. A former union president himself, Ronald Reagan had had to battle both Mafia and Communist attempts to take over the Screen Actors Guild.

At the PCOC's first public hearing, on November 29, 1983, by alphabetical order I sat next to Commissioner Tom McBride, a former Labor Department racketbuster and associate dean of the Stanford University Law School. McBride asked a Justice Department witness: "Has any thought been given to the application of the RICO civil or equitable remedies against the Teamsters Union as a whole?" Suppressing a cheer, I whispered to McBride, whom I had barely met, "You're a man after my own heart!" The witness could not answer, and Chairman Irving Kaufman requested the Justice Department to respond. It did not.

The Commission ended up roundly scolding the Department for failing to use the civil RICO weapon. A civil proceeding gives the government three



"Now, don't expect the bribes to start right away—you have to prime the pump with some free samples first."

huge advantages over criminal prosecution. At stake is not a man's liberty, only his grip on a position of trust in a government-created collective-bargaining monopoly. So instead of the proof "beyond a reasonable doubt" required to jail him, the government has to muster only a "preponderance of evidence." That means enough to convince a judge it is more probable than not that criminals influence him or that he is himself a crook. Second, if the union officer pleads the Fifth Amendment, the judge can conclude truthful answers would reveal criminality—and expel him. And third, the official may be ousted for doing nothing when he had a legal duty to act against corruption, for example by placing mob-dominated union locals under trusteeship and cleaning them up. Inaction may be as culpable under civil RICO as a smoking gun.

In June 1988 Justice Department racketbusters finally brought the epoch-making civil RICO suit against the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Since 1970 they had convicted more than 340 defendants of Teamster-related crimes. They pointed out that 13 of the 18 IBT board members were in office when more than 200 of these criminal convictions had occurred, and yet they had done nothing to clean up the corruption, thus betraying their duty under the IBT constitution and U.S. labor laws.

Only five days before the trial was scheduled to start, the Teamster hierarchs ran up a white flag. They signed a consent order publicly confessing that mobsters controlled important elements of the IBT. To avoid a lengthy trial and appeals, Uncle Sam made one big concession: none of the board members would have to resign. Thus they saved their salaries, fat expense accounts, and pensions, at least temporarily. In return they agreed to the direct election of top officers under stringent government supervision. They also agreed to let a federally appointed overseer remove any corrupt or mob-connected officials for "just cause," a standard far easier than proof "beyond a reasonable doubt." The agreement is open-ended, so Uncle Sam can oversee the IBT until he is satisfied it is clean.

The Teamster case was assigned to eighty-year-old Judge David Edelstein in Manhattan, a 1951 Truman appointee. Judge Edelstein appointed an independent administrator, an investigations officer, and an elections officer to oversee the cleanup.

Fighting All the Way

THE IBT hierarchs obstructed at every step. They started by refusing to provide office space for Judge Edelstein's investigator. They ordered security guards not to let independent auditors in before 9 A.M. or after 5 P.M., and even barred them from the IBT cafeteria and snack bar. They tried to cut the monthly Teamster magazine back to a quarterly to prevent the judge's appointees from presenting their findings to members, and insisted upon the right to censor names of accused union offi-

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cers. In every case, the judge slapped them with orders to stop obstructing.

Fifteen times the IBT appealed. Every time the Second Circuit Court of Appeals backed Judge Edelstein. Twice the union went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, but the Justices turned a deaf ear, too. With the reform decree barely a year old, the IBT's rulers had spent $8,847,000 opposing the judge and his appointees.

And all they had to show for it was the most far-reaching union election supervision order ever. "The entrenched IBT plutocracy," Judge Edelstein declared, had "revealed its opposition to free elections" in its incessant obstruction. He therefore granted requests by the Teamsters for a Democratic Union and another rank-and-file group, the Association for Union Democracy, to open the union's membership lists to challengers.

At first, Teamster members doubted they would ever see an honest, direct election. But they took heart as Judge Edelstein's administrator, Frederick B. Lacey, a former federal judge and racketbuster himself, began to boot mobsters and corrupt officers from the IBT. Hundreds wrote to Lacey and Edelstein. A Teamster of more than twenty years wrote, "Finally we are going to get rid of the hideous influence of organized crime. . . . Many besides myself would like to look you in the eye, shake your hand, pat you on the back, and say we really appreciate your effort." And another urged: "It's high time the labor millionaires who have been abusing the trust of the working people for so long are at least held to the accountability of democratic elections. You are fighting the good fight."

Judge Lacey removed 138 local and national IBT officials on charges of corruption or Mafia connections. Others quit before Lacey could fire them. One was Joseph "Joe T" Trerotola, 82-year-old chief of the New York City Teamsters. Lacey accused him of "deliberately failing to investigate" Mafia influence in his locals.

Meanwhile, rank-and-filers, protected at last by the increased federal oversight, did some house-cleaning of their own. TDU challengers actually beat incumbents in New York, New Jersey, Detroit, San Diego, and elsewhere. In Georgia they won a signal victory, knocking out IBT vice president Weldon Mathis, boss of one of the biggest locals, whom many expected to be the Old Guard's best chance to keep control. Mathis, 62, had a criminal record including conviction for illegal possession of explosives. He ruled his domain like a family kingdom. After he and his son were re-elected to the two top posts, TDU lawyers presented such incontrovertible evidence of vote stealing that the Mathis family had to agree to a new Labor Department–supervised election. Result: seven TDU challengers on a reform slate swept the old gang out. The new president is a 39-year-old trucker who headed the Georgia TDU chapter.

Carey was endorsed by the TDU, though he was not a TDU member. Rank-and-filers raised a $200,000 campaign fund by small contributions. Carey stumped the nation in an old station wagon, staying at members' homes and budget hotels. He assailed the IBT's multiple-salary system under which 165 officials each pocketed more than $100,000 in members' dues, and in some cases more than $500,000. Carey promised to end multiple salaries and cut the president's salary from $225,000 to $175,000.

He won with 188,883 votes against 129,538 for R. V. Durham, the union bureaucracy's candidate, and 71,227 for Walter Shea, another longtime insider. (Though the IBT has 1,550,000 members, only 25 per cent voted.)

So the liberation of the Teamsters took 35 years from the 1957 kickoff of

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the McClellan hearings to the inauguration this month of the first IBT president freely elected by rank-and-file members. Sometimes the good guys do win. Just like in the movies—but it takes longer. □

The Perils of Jim Baker

POLICY CONFRONTS REALITY

Was the resolution of the Haiti crisis a victory for democracy or just for common sense?

ELLIOTT ABRAMS

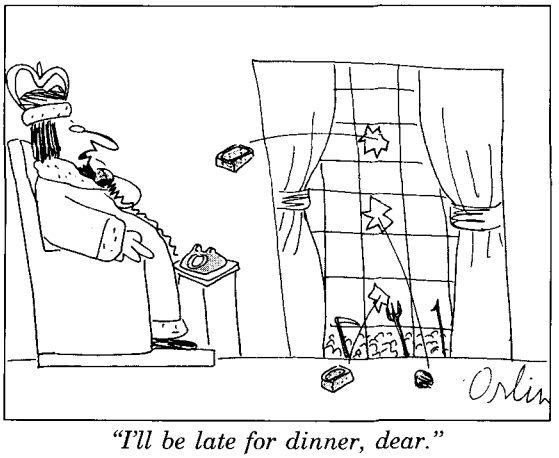
HAITI is such a small and poor land that policy-makers can perhaps be forgiven for thinking it infinitely malleable. Is it really possible that the colossus that crushed Saddam Hussein cannot bend the Haitians to its will? So it seems, and the story is a cautionary tale.

The official American version goes something like this: Haiti had a free election in 1990 and the winner was Jean-Bertrand Aristide. He was governing Haiti under very difficult circumstances—new experiment with democracy, same old wretched poverty—when the army overthrew him, and so the U.S. sponsored an OAS embargo of commerce with Haiti. The goal was to add economic to diplomatic pressure and force the military to restore democracy to Haiti and Aristide to power.

Now, the official version continues, those pressures have resulted in a compromise agreement: the Haitian parliament is choosing a new prime minister, who will consult regularly with Aristide and prepare the way for his return from exile. This selection of a new civilian government will be rewarded with the lifting of the embargo. And with the embargo off, and calm returning to Haiti, the Haitian "boat people" can now in good conscience be sent home.

This version is not actually believed by many American officials, and it is not accurate. The U.S. Government got itself buried in a deeply flawed policy, and managed to climb out only by tacitly abandoning it.

The first American mistake was to equate Aristide and democracy. While Aristide was democratically elected, he did not rule as a democrat. He espoused and applauded mob violence against his political opponents, intimidating them, the press, the Church, and the parliament. Moreover, as the State Department Human Rights report on Haiti put it, "The Aristide Government repeatedly attempted to interfere with the judicial process or usurp it through 'mob justice.'" When the parliament met to consider a no-confidence vote against Aristide, its members were threatened with "Père Lebrun," the Haitian term for necklacing. To oppose Aristide was to court injury or death.



"I'll be late for dinner, dear."

All of this explains the military's—and the Haitian elite's—reluctance to accept Aristide back as president.

Does this mean the military was right to overthrow him? Clearly not, but it does mean the Latin American and U.S. protestations are too simple. When U.S. and Latin diplomats said Aristide's return was the key to "restoring democracy" in Haiti, Haiti's elites knew they were either ignorant or dissembling. Of course many U.S. officials fully understood all this, but policy—once uttered by Secretary Baker himself in a stirring speech to the OAS—is policy.

The second U.S. mistake was to allow our policy to be very largely made in Latin America. To the Latins, Haiti isn't a country at all, it's a principle: No coups. The harsher the punishment of Haiti, and the sooner Aristide returns, the safer many Latin democrats will feel. The near-miss coup in Venezuela has presumably strengthened this view.

But Haiti is not just a principle, after all; it's a country filled with poverty and violence, where none of the sides has a fully defensible position. Like Algeria or Georgia today, or Germany in 1933 and Chile in 1973, it raises a difficult question: What attitude should democratic countries take toward governments that come to power in free elections, but then undermine democratic institutions? When we duck this question, we are very likely to end up with a policy that simply does not reflect reality.

The third U.S. mistake was to impose on Haiti an embargo that further impoverished the poor and led to a wave of boat people, without having much of an impact on the rich. For years the United States Government had importuned American companies to invest in Haiti and create jobs there. The embargo spoiled those investments in a flash, because the goods being produced could not be exported. The factories closed, and many will never open again.

This left the U.S. Government in the untenable position of attacking Haiti's economy, destroying jobs, creating emigrants—and then telling them "No!" when they sought a haven in this country. On the legal point the Administration was clearly right. The Haitians' case may be immensely attrac-

Mr. Abrams is a Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute.

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tive from the humanitarian point of view, for most of them seek an escape from desperate poverty. What most are not is refugees, a legal term denoting individuals who can show a well-founded fear of persecution and therefore have a *right* to safe haven. The key here is targeting—they are after *you*—and a generalized fear of violence or poverty won't do. More than one-third of all the Haitian boat people were able to convince Immigration Service officials that they had such a well-founded fear, which seems high but may be accurate. After all, emigrants are a self-selected group.

But it would be a mistake to call all the boat people refugees. That term, with its *right* to special treatment, should be reserved for individuals truly in fear of persecution. Alas, we will no doubt be seeing plenty of these emerging from countries around the world in the coming years, and the protections of refugee status must be maintained.

The real issue has been whether to give a sort of temporary humanitarian safe haven to any Haitian who can get to the United States. The Haitians would be so much better off that one can hardly resist. But will there be a numerical limit? Should we take only the first ten thousand, those already on Guantanamo? What about the next ten, or fifty, or one hundred thousand? Should we suspend all numerical limitation on entry of Haitians? For how long? Until Aristide is back? Until the embargo is lifted? For thirty days? Given the manifest inhumanity of creating emigrants via our embargo, the Administration's position was doomed: it had to drop the embargo unless it took the emigrants, or take the emigrants if it wanted to maintain the embargo. As Guantanamo filled up, the Pentagon began to press for an answer, and, anyway, in an election year this was a mess that had to be resolved fast.

Facing Facts

SO FACTS had to be faced, and were. The embargo was "modified," which was a signal to Haiti's political actors that the United States had decided to back away from the French and Venezuelan embrace of Aristide. Aristide figured out that he had to negotiate, and did so.

The agreement that was reached last month between Aristide and the parliament is pretty good; it emphasizes the role of the one legitimate, elected institution in Haiti, the parliament, which selects the prime minister and presumably can replace him if he performs badly. It includes an amnesty for participation in last year's coup, an unavoidable concession to the army. It leaves the army's commander in place, a good feature as—despite Aristide's hatred for him—General Cedras is more likely than any alternative candidate to keep the army under control.

And, last but not least, it states no date certain for Aristide's return. In reality, once the parliament is functioning and the embargo lifted, Aristide's return will become a steadily receding goal. He will not be back in Haiti this year, and perhaps not for many more. And here lies the agreement's weakest point: should Aristide turn against it and urge his followers into the streets, violence will rise fast, and the army will meet it with even more violence. Aristide, even in exile, thus remains a key figure, and we may all come to regret yet again that the U.S. was not more forthright during this crisis in denouncing his nondemocratic methods and beliefs.

What should the United States do now? A brief study of why many White House, NSC, and Pentagon officials seemed to grasp the situation better than Mr. Baker's State Department might be in order. On the economic side, it is difficult to know how to repair the damage the embargo did, but perhaps a special program of help to investors is in order.

More important, the U.S. should continue the search for common ground among the elected Haitian parliament, the army, and the tiny but brave group of Haitian centrist democrats. The latter need our help and should get it. (Here, the U.S. Embassy in Haiti has been playing a key role, and Ambassador Adams has emerged from the recent crisis as he went into it: trusted and respected.) We should worry about the views of those democrats, not about the opinions of Aristide or his Latin American (and French) defenders. And we should make it clear that elected leaders who subvert the rule of law and assault the very democratic institutions that brought them to power will forfeit American support. □

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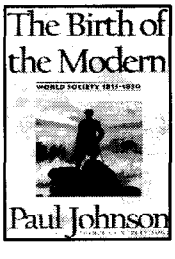

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The Mask of David

AMOS PERLMUTTER

PATRICK SEALE is, let us say, highly informed about and closely connected to Syria and its leadership, and to Arab nationalist radicals in general. His 1985 book, *The Struggle for Syria, 1954–1958*, is something of a classic, while his 1991 study, *Assad*, has led some observers to dub him a court historian.

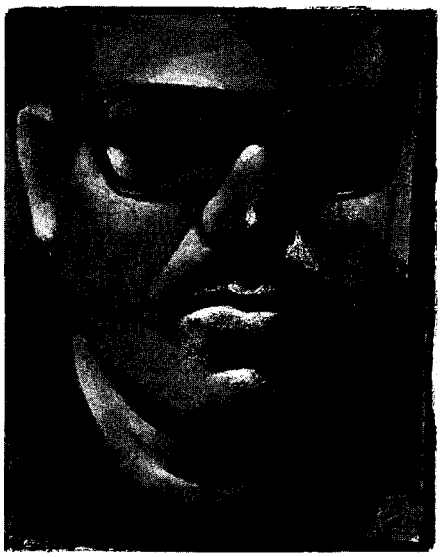
His new book, *Abu Nidal: A Gun for Hire*, mixes half-truths and a reasonable tone with inside information that is at least authentically flavored. The book is always fascinating, but it has its own complicated agenda.

Seale seeks to do more than merely tell the story of Abu Nidal. He also tries to explain why Abu Nidal is what he is. And what he is, according to Seale, is a renegade and an outcast, an aberration well outside the mainstream of the PLO, which is trying to shed its terrorist image and depict itself as willing to negotiate. Hence the title, which portrays Abu Nidal as nothing more than a vicious mercenary, bereft of allegiance or ideology.

Abu Nidal: A Gun for Hire, by Patrick Seale (Random House, 340 pp., $22)

But that is only the half of it. For Seale's Abu Nidal is not merely a creature of Palestinian radicalism and terrorist schooling. He is born of *Israeli* aggression and brutality. Seale goes to great lengths to uncover what he says are the real root causes of Abu Nidal's evolution. These lie in the partition of Palestine and the resulting war. Seale's analysis of these events is couched in the prose of "perhaps," "probably," and "maybe"—a mountain of qualifiers laid out in a tone of such measured reasonableness that one might almost forget how highly selective his evidence is.

"What happened in Palestine in 1947–48 is one of the most contentious subjects in modern history. This book is hardly the place to rehearse the old polemics or to set out the rival versions of history as seen by Arab and Jew," Seale declares, and then proceeds to give the reader his own version. He contends that the Zionists considered partition, the plan passed by the UN General Assembly, to constitute "international sanction for a country of their own," which in practical terms it was. Of course, the Palestinians could also have availed themselves of it. Fortunately, Seale is on hand to explain why that isn't the point: "But the *way* the state of Israel was created, with the violent expulsion or stampeding of its Arab inhabitants, left much to be desired and has been a source of furious controversy ever since."



Tim Bower

Leave aside that states are often born amid violence (see 1776). Merely note Seale's implication that the displacement took place solely as a result of Israeli tactics. In fact, the invasion of Palestine by five Arab armies was at least as responsible as Israeli action for Palestinian displacement and subsequent resentment, if not more so. Palestinians who were expelled ended up either rejecting partition or having no voice in the matter at all, the decision being made for them by their Arab brethren in Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq. Seale reluctantly acknowledges the crux of the matter; then dismisses it: "Perhaps none of this would have happened had the Arabs accepted the UN proposal in 1947 to partition Palestine into an Arab and Jewish sector, but they didn't and the result has been more or less unending misery and violence."

Whatever the cause, the result according to Seale was that "thousands of Arab peasants, evicted from the land as it passed to Jewish owners, set up miserable shantytowns around the port [of Jaffa]. Hostility between Arab and Jew, in Abu Nidal's youth, was an inescapable fact of daily life." Seale paints Abu Nidal as a victim of that misery.

But Abu Nidal, if a victim, is not quite a politically correct one. Indeed, he may be something worse: an instrument of Israel, if not a tacit ally. Thus, on page 319: "Abu Nidal is a professional killer who has sold his deadly services certainly to the Arabs and *perhaps* to the Israelis as well." (My italics.) Why so? The speculation rests on the assertion that Abu Nidal has killed Arab moderates, weakening chances for successful negotiations, in the period when the ever more benign Yasir Arafat has been eager to start negotiations. Arafat is portrayed as being consistently foiled in his efforts by Henry Kissinger and by Labor and Likud alike. Why not by Abu Nidal too? In short, Mossad secretly nurtures the most radical elements of the PLO, the George Habashes and Abu Nidals, in order to forestall successful rapprochement. Damned clever, these Israelis.

Seale's proof of this theory is the fact that Abu Nidal is still alive. He has not been assassinated by Israel. Given the cunning of the Israelis, this has to be more than coincidence. Seale therefore adds the further speculation that Abu Nidal is useful in sustaining

Mr. Perlmutter, a professor of political science at American University, is editor of the Journal of Strategic Studies *and author of 13 books on the Middle East.*

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Israel's uncompromising stance, allowing it to continue to occupy the West Bank in perpetuity. As long as Abu Nidal continues his deadly work, Israel can wave the bloody shirt.

The truth is rather different. Abu Nidal was a follower of Arafat back when the PLO was completely dedicated to terrorism and the destruction of Israel. At that time, Israeli leaders —men like Ben Gurion, Sharett, Eshkol, Dayan, and Eban—were rejecting the concept of Complete Israel and permanent occupation. Israel accepted Kissinger's 1973–75 mediation, which opened the way for Sadat's historic 1977 trip to Israel and the 1979 Camp David Accords. The latter established the idea of Palestinian autonomy and remain the only real blueprint for Israeli–Palestinian negotiations.

But Seale's half-truths are not his alone; he had a virtual collaborator. Abu Iyad—the former PLO chief of intelligence and himself a notorious assassin until he was killed by Mossad a year ago—was the source, through a number of interviews, for most of Seale's information on Abu Nidal.

The Abu Nidal portrayed by Seale and Abu Iyad is a brutal assassin, a product of Nasserite, Ba'athist, and Marxist Arab radicalism, an instrument of Iraqi policy. He is radically different, therefore, from their version of Arafat, who longs for diplomatic and political respectability. Of course, this exonerates the PLO from its own past as a rejectionist organization of the most extreme sort. Similarly, Seale's Abu Nidal stands in complete contrast to a PLO establishment which after 1967 allegedly sought to separate itself from the sponsorship of Arab dictators. You might almost forget that the PLO itself was the creation of Egypt's Nasser.

Seale is working out a tortuous form of moral equivalency here, elevating the PLO to moderate status from the first and separating it from Abu Nidal, while portraying Israel as being akin to Abu Nidal and his terrorist organization. He even tries to establish a similarity between Yitzhak Shamir's former terrorist activities (in the Lehi radical underground) and Abu Nidal's present ones. (The elementary errors in the account of Lehi confirm that Seale, notoriously ignorant of Israeli politics, has again relied on careless or dishonest sources.) This serves to suggest that Israel and the PLO have equal historical status. But Shamir's current status is not a product of any Lehi triumph, but a by-product of forty years of political change in Israel and the region as a whole and of democratic elections in an internationally recognized state.

In short, Seale, by making Abu Nidal appear to be a lone gunman with no connection to the PLO, tries to whitewash that organization, which has in fact killed more Arabs than has Israel. By suggesting that Israel has become the property of the terrorist group Lehi, he implies that it has the same status as Abu Nidal. And with this rationale, Seale hints at suspicious underground connections between Abu Nidal and Israel, between the terrorist and his victims.

Thus is history turned upside down and made a travesty. □

Exit, Stage Back

MAGGIE GALLAGHER

PITY POOR Susan Faludi. Just when she thought she had everything—a high-status job as a *Wall Street Journal* reporter, the joys of single life, power breakfasts, the right to an abortion, even a Pulitzer Prize—suddenly, sometime in the Eighties, she began to feel unloved. Legions of women, instead of following—or at least envying—women like her, began to do unspeakable things: like vote for Reagan, or don miniskirts, or have babies. How to account for this inexplicable backsliding? Why was feminism losing its hold on women at the moment of its (and Miss Faludi's) greatest triumph? Suddenly an answer came to her: It must be a *media conspiracy*.

Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women, by Susan Faludi (Crown, 552 pp., $24)

Backlash is her attempt to stretch that threadbare argument into a five-hundred-page manifesto on the glories of hard-core feminism, and for a surprising number of supposedly sophisticated women, it works. Seldom has a book received the kind of unalloyed worship heaped on *Backlash*. Ellen Goodman sounded a common note by praising Miss Faludi's careful handling of evidence "debunking the studies, experts, and trend stories." To top off the praisefest, *Backlash* was recently nominated for the National Book Award.

Listen carefully to the roar of applause for *Backlash*: it is the sound of feminism committing suicide.

For a decade feminist leaders have striven mightily to throw off the reputation they earned in the early Seventies, to convince American women of the existence of a kinder, gentler feminism. Feminism, they said, is ready to enter a Second Stage devoted to helping women balance the needs of family and work and improve relationships between the sexes. Real feminists, they told us, do not burn bras, hate men, or dislike babies.

Susan Faludi is having none of it. Betty Friedan's Second Stage is just "a call for a murkily defined new order that is heavy on old Victorian rhetorical flourishes." If women are losing faith in feminism, it is because we are being brainwashed (poor things) by a male-dominated media conspiracy into believing certain ridiculous myths. Thirty- and forty-something career women like her aren't having trouble finding mates, they just love long hours, lonely nights, and whipping up microwave dinners for one too much to even *think* of relinquishing their freedom. Divorce doesn't impoverish women or damage children, and the sudden emergence of silk bustiers and pouf skirts is proof that evil men are out to demean and control women.

Evidence is not Miss Faludi's strong point. In fact, while she prides herself on (and has been widely praised for) uncovering errors in other people's statistics, misreporting data appears to be something of a personal hobby with her. On numerous occasions, when she quotes a study or poll with which I happen to be familiar, she seriously distorts the results, and in ways so blatant as to suggest more than mere incompetence at work.

Miss Gallagher's The Abolition of Marriage *will be published in the fall of 1993 by Poseidon Press.*

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Sometimes she outright misquotes data. For example, to dispute the man shortage, she cites a 1986 government study to the effect that one-third of unmarried women are living with a man; the actual figure is 4 per cent—although the study did note that one-third of currently single women have cohabited at some point in their lives.

At other times, she more subtly misconstrues. She cites a 1986 *Newsweek* poll as "proof" that 75 per cent of working mothers want careers; in fact, according to the poll, only 13 per cent of full-time working mothers wanted to work full-time—a plurality (34 per cent) preferred part-time work, and the rest were divided between wanting more flexible hours or a home-based business, and wanting to be full-time housewives.

The reality that Miss Faludi, like most other feminists, willfully refuses to face is that mothers—even working mothers—overwhelmingly choose to make caring for children their first priority. According to Census Bureau data, almost two-thirds of married mothers either don't work or work part-time. And according to a 1990 poll, even a majority of working mothers now want to go home.

But by far her most common tactic is simply to ignore the voluminous evidence that contradicts her point of view. Her preferred strategy is to pick one study, find some (often trivial) error or methodological quibble, and airily dismiss the whole argument as a media invention. She is convinced, for example, that media revisionism is responsible for Americans' growing reservations about a 50 per cent divorce rate. Lenore Weitzman's famous figures—that women's incomes drop 73 per cent after divorce—are wrong, Miss Faludi maintains: women's income drops "only" 30 per cent after divorce. Anyway feminists can't be responsible because they didn't promote no-fault divorce reform, she says, conveniently ignoring that feminists certainly did heavily promote divorce.

And she remains one of divorce's biggest cheerleaders, despite the mounting evidence of its disastrous economic effects on women. Single mothers are six times more likely to be poor than married mothers, and one-third of all divorced women end up on welfare. None of which bothers Miss Faludi in the least. As for the pain divorce inflicts on children—well, she

Roberto Parada

just isn't interested. Judith Wallerstein, whose *Second Chances* reported that five years after the divorce one-third of the children involved remain clinically depressed, "never bothered to test her theory on a control group" Miss Faludi says, and, having "disposed" of just one of the thousands of studies pointing to the traumatic effects of divorce on children, she quickly drops the subject.

Backlash is an ignorant, nasty, *little* book, for all its 552 pages and pseudo-scholarly footnotes—small-minded, crafty, conniving, a disgrace even to journalistic standards, and an insult to women. Feminism, Faludi style, ultimately fails because it cannot come to terms with women's unaccountable desire not only to have babies, but actually to spend time raising them, in intact families, with men. Hard experience has taught a growing number of women that the biggest danger facing us today comes not from discrimination in the workplace but from the collapse of the family—a disaster which feminism partly engineered, loudly applauded, and, as the reception of *Backlash* proves, does not know how to disown. □

Enter the Culture Warriors

NEAL B. FREEMAN

The De-Valuing of America: The Fight for Our Culture and Our Children, by William J. Bennett (Summit Books; 272 pp., $20)

IT STARTED in October with Jack Kemp making the rounds of the talk shows, explaining patiently why he found his boss guilty of political heresy and, much worse, economic nonsense. It continued in December with Patrick Buchanan declaring his candidacy and, electorally speaking, putting his size 10½ Cordovan where he thought it might do some good. And now comes William Bennett with a new book spelling out campaign plans for the culture war.

It is the beginning of an era, my friends, and it begins not with either bang or whimper but with a more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger leavetaking, a shuffling of restless feet, and, finally, a pell-mell sprint to the future. What confounds the casual onlooker is the increasing likelihood that one of these men may get to the future before the Left has even recovered from Hurricane Ron. What engages the knights political is this question: Which version of conservatism will prevail?

Of the three post-fusionist figures, only Kemp seems to appreciate that the freedom party has won. The national-security paradigm, he seems to recognize (between dalliances with big-government conservatism), was an aberration born of necessity, the price that liberty pays to order and only when it must. The spoils of victory for Kemp are smaller armies, easier immigration, lower tariffs, and less intrusion by the state in the lives of its citizens. But the problem for Kemp—always the problem for Kemp—is timing. As Byron, politically incorrect before it was cool, put it: "And whispering, 'I will ne'er consent'—consented." And so with Kemp. Thereby opening the door to Contestant #2. . . .

Buchanan's message, while not fully coherent, is, by comparison with the President's, a model of Cartesian rigor. He calls us to an older and better America that takes no stuff from nobody, be they free-traders, free-lunchers, or free-lovers. No compromise for him: he wants to get mad *and*

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get even. And he is not content to mumble his objections in the corridors of power. He is asking for a division of the house: "Your America or mine. Let's put it to a vote." It's hard to say which the President finds more distasteful, carping little supply-siders in the Cabinet Room or brawling right-wingers in the parking lot.

If, then, Kemp is conservatism with a happy face and Buchanan is the accusing finger, Bennett is the firmly set jaw. He sees the ideological war in cultural terms and reckons it not unwinnable. His book, *The De-Valuing of America: The Fight for Our Culture and Our Children*, recounts his experience in government under Reagan and Bush—first as chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, then as secretary of education, and finally as drug czar. Cleanly outlined, this is the neoconservative portfolio, and, by his lights or anybody else's, Bennett acquitted himself superbly. As he sums up his decade in Washington: "I didn't 'grow' (meaning become more liberal) in office. In fact, as time went on—having heard all the arguments of the liberals and the elites—I left government more conservative than when I started." Reliving his head-on collisions with the culture lords from the teachers unions, the tenured professoriate, the media-certified black leadership, the manic secularists, and the value-neutralists, one concurs. It was a helluva show.

Perhaps the peak of Bennett's career—and certainly the most compelling part of this book—was his passage at Education, where he made a daily habit of speaking truth to power. His formula for reform was to concentrate on the three Cs—content, character, and choice. By content, he meant the hard curriculum, the transmission of knowledge between the generations. By character, he meant the teaching of values, the assertion of difference between right and wrong. And by choice, he meant accountability to parents. Simple truths, but, lest we forget, truths all but unspoken even under Reagan's first education secretary, Terrel Bell.

To be sure, some sections of the book seem to be cuts from the *Bennett's Greatest Hits* album, but the text comes alive whenever he hits the front lines—the classroom. To find out what works in education, Bennett taught in more than a hundred schools. And what he found is what all of us uncertified yahoos have been trying to tell our local educrats all these years: The classroom works when it's run by a gifted, dedicated teacher, somebody who knows the material and cares about the kids. All other problems can be managed—classroom size, neighborhood, race, budget, family background. Find a good teacher, give him some elbow room, hold him accountable, and you've got yourself a school. Bennett calls it the iron law of education: "The 'system' doesn't educate anyone. Individuals do." In the most moving parts of the book, Bennett sketches anecdotal portraits of the great teachers he ran across. They are heroic figures.

In his work at Education and elsewhere, Bennett showed that a bright and indefatigable conservative can do more than control damage at the federal level. He can advance the careers of the like-minded few, shift budgetary emphasis, frame the issues anew, and pound the bully pulpit. All of which may beg the question for small-government conservatives: If liberals enlarge the cultural program and conservatives, in their turn, tidy it up, can there be any long-term result other than bureaucratic bloat and cultural hegemony? It was under a Republican Administration, after all, that we citizens looked on for the better part of a year as our representatives remained locked in debate over the question: Should taxpayer funds be spent to promote photographs of men sticking whip handles into each other? This was a question, from all reports, on which the electorate was not closely divided.

Bennett comes at the question obliquely and, in my view, finds the center of the target. The cultural battle, he says, will be won or lost in our private institutions—churches and synagogues, the media, the schools and universities, the arts and the professions. The government's role will be important. It can help or it can hurt; it can support traditional values or it can subsidize nihilism. But its role won't be decisive. It can't reclaim our institutions. Only we can. And Bennett reminds us to keep our eye on the prize: "Whoever wins the battle for the culture gets to teach the children." □

FILM

Tenors, Tomatoes, and a Turkey

JOHN SIMON

PETER CHELSOM'S ***Hear My Song*** is an attempt to capture the fey charm of Ireland at its most leprechaunish by recapturing the charm of the old Ealing Studios comedies at their most English. You recall those delightful comedies of several decades ago when Alec Guinness, Joan Greenwood, Joyce Grenfell, James Robertson Justice, and other such foxy folk made us laugh intelligent laughter of the sort that never made us miss a joke because we were still rolling in the aisles over the last one. After all, we were not being paid to dust the floor with our clothing; the Ealing (I almost wrote "healing") films made us laugh with our minds and hearts rather than with our bellies.

Well, *Hear My Song* is about Micky O'Neill, a desperate pop-concert promoter, whose Liverpool nightclub, Heartly's, is slipping. Unable to book a decent act into it, he has to resort to fellows like Franc Cinatra, who reads fine to people who have no eye for spelling, but sounds dreadful to those with an ear for music. Under the threat of foreclosure, Micky books a chap who bills himself as "Mr. X—is it or isn't it?" The reference is to Josef (Jo) Locke, the legendary Irish tenor whose voice made women weep, but whose evasions did not make the tax collector smile.

So, thirty years ago, just after being a judge in the Miss Dairy Goodness beauty contest and crowning pretty Cathleen Doyle as winner, only to start a hot affair with her—and no less hotly pursued by Constable Jim Abbott—Josef had to flee to Ireland. Though Jim also had the hots for Cathleen, her daughter, Nancy, was presumably (even if the film dare not spell it out) Jo's love child. The pretty and spunky dental hygienist is now

Mr. Simon, NR's film critic, is also theater critic for New York *magazine.*

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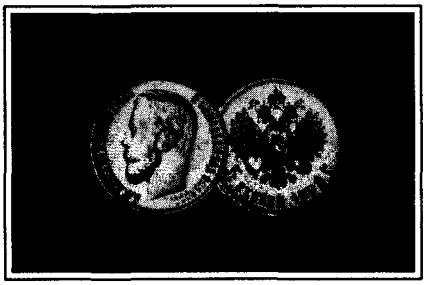

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Micky's girlfriend, but not above interrupting him in mid-coitus when he can't bring himself to utter the words "I love you," and running out on him. He is left flat, and flat broke.

Mr. X is having his troubles, too. A Jo Locke look-alike and sound-alike, he can fool some of the audience and even Cathleen into wishfully thinking he is Locke. But he does not fool the constable, the rest of the audience, or even the still loving Cathleen once he has sweet-sung and sweet-talked her into bed, where he proves more like Brand X. With Mr. X exposed, Micky has no choice but to find the real Josef Locke and bring him back alive and aloud, constables or no constables. The wrecking ball hangs over Heartly's and Nancy's heart is cooling. So off to Ireland goes Micky.

He enlists the reluctant help of his friend Fintan O'Donnell, a small-time Dublin talent agent and owner of a hoary Morris Traveller in which the two of them trundle off to picturesque Tullamore, where Jo was last sighted. Eccentricities in an Irish pub, picture-postcard-pretty scenery, a prize cow Locke is bidding on at auction accidentally won by Micky, an old well into which someone (Micky, Fintan, or the cow) may fall, Micky mistaken by Jo and his cronies for a fiendish tax collector . . . on and on goes the likable but labored comedy, chugging along unoiled by Ealing knowhow.

Co-written by England's Peter Chelsom and Ulster's Adrian Dunbar, with Chelsom directing and Dunbar starring as Micky, *Hear My Song* comes across loud and muddy. Partly based on fact (Jo Locke, Mr. X, and the constabulary) and partly invented (Micky, Nancy, Cathleen), it has some of the ingredients of luscious humor, but not the characters and characterizations that bejeweled British comedy in its prime. Micky, the brinkmanship gymnast and tightrope talker, needs the charm of a Robert Donat or a Roger Livesey and the writing of a T. E. B. Clarke. Tara Fitzgerald is a breathtaking young Nancy, and Shirley Anne Field a stunning middle-aged Cathleen; all either of them needs is better material.

Can you imagine Ealing having to import actors from America? Both the real and the fake Josef Locke are transoceanic. Ned Beatty is expectably good at the darker aspects of Jo, and surprisingly twinkly at the lighter ones, but he cannot convey a charismatic singer, no matter how plummy a voice is pumped into him, because the tenors who make women weep do it with something more than singing (though not necessarily looks), and that is not forthcoming. As Mr. X, William Hootkins is a little too creepy to be funny. David McCallum is a proper nemesis of a constable, and, in his very first film, James Nesbitt is a Fintan that outshines Adrian Dunbar's Micky; but the rest of the supporting cast is humdrum. There is an idiomatic pub scene and a flash of bravura in the otherwise harum-scarum climax, but *Hear My Song* does not satisfy as the succulent old comedies did. Or were we just younger then?

■ On the contrary, ***Fried Green Tomatoes***, from which the very title might scare off faint hearts and city slickers (especially those who are not

Alan Nahigian

Southerners), proves to be an unassumingly graceful and, aside from a few heavy touches, fulfilling film. Based on a novel by Fannie Flagg, a former actress and stand-up comedienne, and co-scripted by her and the late Carol Sobieski, this is a "woman's picture" that nevertheless should go down pleasurably with male viewers, demonstrating that not even feminism, of which there is plenty in the movie, can drive an undislodgeable wedge between men and women.

It is the story of two female friendships. One in the present, between Evelyn Couch, an obese and unloved wife who, visiting a relative in the hospital, is befriended by a feisty octogenarian, Ninny Threadgoode, who regales her with tales of her home town,

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Whistle Stop, Alabama. They center on Idgie Threadgoode, an unconventional, spirited young woman who ran the Whistle Stop Café, a railside eatery where the specialty was fried green tomatoes. Idgie the tomboy had for best friend the town beauty, Ruth, and for advisor the family's black seamstress, Sipsy. Idgie and Ruth's friendship is the corresponding bit of female bonding in the past. When called upon, all four friends can show resourcefulness and guts.

Idgie and Ruth have two enemies: the railroad, which kills or maims some of their menfolk; and Frank Bennett, Ruth's vicious ex-husband, who mysteriously disappears in the process of trying to abduct his baby son from Ruth's loving care. Frank is a much greater threat than the railroad; though duly gotten rid of, he resurfaces posthumously and gets Idgie and her friend Big George, Sipsy's son, into a passel of difficulties with the law, intensified by Idgie's never having discriminated against blacks, in her café or elsewhere.

The film does have its melodramatic moments that do not play as smoothly as they might, and here and there a touch of improbability. But both pairs of friends, Evelyn and Ninny (Kathy Bates and Jessica Tandy) and Idgie and Ruth (Mary Stuart Masterson and Mary-Louise Parker), are idiomatically conceived and racily played. And the way the two stories come together in the end, though by no means unpredictable, is a model of skill and finesse under the directorial guidance of Jon Avnet. Miss Parker, a pretty young woman who, not unlike Belloc's Maria, is given to making faces that produce a horrible effect, is here kept free of mannerisms and gives a restrained performance as Ruth, which I attribute to Avnet's acumen.

Jessica Tandy is just as sublime as she was in *Driving Miss Daisy*, though this old woman is very different from that one; and Kathy Bates is good both as the initially downtrodden and miserable fattie and as the later self-respecting and self-assertive one. Mary Stuart Masterson is unbeatable in tomboy roles, and there are several relishable performances in smaller parts. The Whistle Stop Café, with its bustling and egalitarian atmosphere, does not come fully to life—I never got the taste of fried green tomatoes in my mouth—but the ending succeeds in being both extremely affecting and wholly life-affirming, as befits a picture that means to make few waves our spirits can't go surfing on. Some Flagg-waving is due this modest American film that can be enjoyed by adults and children, natives and foreigners, feminists and male chauvinists, Southerners and even Yankees who never so much as saw, let alone ate, a less than rubicund tomato.

■ If there were a prize for the most ridiculous, preposterous, and unspeakable movie of recent times (say, since *The Fisher King*), the hands-down winner would be ***Shining Through***, written and directed by David Seltzer from a novel by Susan Isaacs. This is a World War II story in which Michael Douglas, as the head of something that may be the OSS, sends his completely untrained but spy-movie-wise secretary, Melanie Griffith, on a secret mission of utmost importance and danger into Nazi Germany. Miss Griffith plays a German Jewess who grew up in America but speaks flawless German, even though the actress (I use the word loosely) cannot utter the simplest German word with anything resembling correct pronunciation. Conversely, Douglas plays the head of Army Intelligence (or whatever it is) as not knowing a word of German, but able to move freely in and out of Nazi Germany merely by holding up a card saying he recently underwent throat surgery that left him speechless.

Not nearly so speechless, however, as I was, watching this pinnacle of imbecility in which a high-ranking German officer keeps the plans of the German invasion of Britain in his cellar (!) behind an iron door whose key is conveniently kept on a ledge just above it!! The whole film is on that level of stupidity, and constructed, moreover, in a way that guarantees lack of suspense. The leading performances defy my usually adequate power of invective. Even John Gielgud comes close to looking bad in a relatively small role, while the other supporting parts are cheerfully mangled, although Joely Richardson, one of Vanessa Redgrave's daughters, manages to be acceptable in the absurdly conceived part of a double agent.

Even the backgrounds, though shot on locations in Austria and Germany, look entirely unconvincing; thus in the

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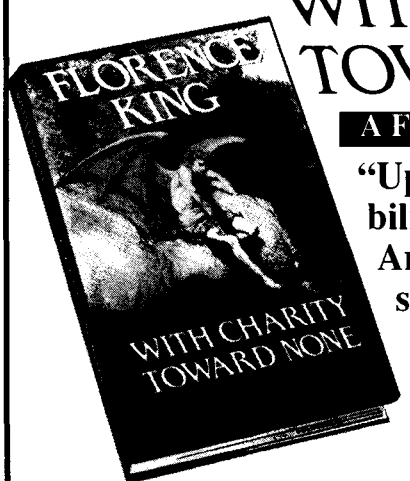

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streets of wartime Berlin we never see a single person in uniform, and indeed very few people of any kind—except during an air-raid sequence, when a shelter suddenly fills up with hordes of panicky, previously invisible people. Seldom have I been so desperate for one touch of realism in a film—say, a talking dog or a cameo by Barbra Streisand as Frau Göring. I guess the closest thing to credibility we got was Douglas, riddled by German bullets and left for dead, turning up alive in the next scene. □

OPERA

PC Camelot

HERB GREER

A NEW OPERA is an important event and should be an enjoyable one. Unfortunately, much contemporary music appears to come from what Shaw called the genuine pulpit conscience. As he put the matter: "It annoys me to see people comfortable when they ought to be uncomfortable." The British composer Harrison Birtwistle betrayed just such a conscience on a radio interview, shortly before the premiere of his new opera, *Gawain*, at London's Royal Opera House. Speaking of his approach to musical theater, he compared it to a game in which "I make up a set of rules, then rub them out, and don't tell you what they are."

The rules in *Gawain* are not particularly obscure. Birtwistle employs various technical devices (repetition, motifs, cyclical treatment of material, sound effects like blocks to represent the appearance of a horse, even the spacing of notes to—he claims—suggest character); with these he spins out his score and also relates it to abstract concepts, especially Time (it is capitalized like that in the program notes). I do not mean time in the sense of rhythm. Much, indeed most, of the music in *Gawain* is set like concrete in a rhetorical prose mood which makes any sense of pulse incidental. For about the first ten minutes of the opera, its obsessively dissonant texture, plus violent and crude melodramatic acting, gives off a certain excitement, like the scores of 1960s Hammer horror films. But well before the end of the three-hour opera, the people sitting around me (and they claimed to be fans of Birtwistle's music) were looking furtively at their watches.

The story of *Gawain* was adapted by the British poet David Harsent from a wonderful fourteenth-century poem, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, which is gripping, vivid, and beautifully shaped.

Christmas revels at King Arthur's court are interrupted by a mysterious Green Knight who issues a challenge: he offers his great axe to any knight of the Round Table who will strike him one blow; but in a year and a day that man must come to the Green Knight's chapel and accept a similar blow in return. Sir Gawain agrees, and cuts off the Green Knight's head. The body picks up its severed head, reminds Gawain of the bargain, and leaves.

After a year and a winter journey full of adventures, Sir Gawain comes to the castle of Bertilak de Hautdesert, who tells him that the Green Chapel is not far away. Gawain is invited by Bertilak to stay in the castle and keep his wife company while he goes out and hunts. The men make a bargain: Bertilak will give Gawain his trophies from the hunt if Gawain will give him any trophy he wins in the castle.

For three days Bertilak's wife tries to seduce Gawain, but is only able to kiss him. Each night, given first a stag's head, then a boar's head, and finally a fox's tail, Gawain gives Bertilak one, two, and three kisses. But the third time he holds something back. The wife has given him a magic green belt. With this charm, she tells him, "There is no hathel under heven tohewe him that myght." (There is no creature under heaven that can cut him to pieces.)

Wearing the belt, Gawain goes to meet the Green Knight. As agreed, he exposes his neck to a blow from the great axe, flinches once, then holds firm. The Knight strikes, only nicking Gawain, then reveals himself as Bertilak, admitting that he arranged the

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attempted seduction as a test of Gawain's virtue. The lie about the belt is forgiven because it arose from Gawain's love of his life. Bertilak gives him the belt to wear as a token of the ordeal.

Gawain returns to Arthur's court, bitterly reproaching himself for cowardice. Nevertheless, the court acclaims him and it is agreed that all the knights shall wear a similar belt as a reminder of weakness and sin.

Unfortunately, Harsent and Birtwistle were not satisfied with the story. They tinkered with the characters, changing Arthur from an exuberant strong king into a weakling who runs his court as an "Arthurian clubland" with a "xenophobic conspiracy of codes and chivalry and derring-do." The knights of the Round Table are supposed to be "beardless boys with nice suits of armor and a tiresome liking for male bonding."

Bertilak is now made to be suspicious and jealous of his wife, and the bargain with Gawain a device to catch *her* out. The evil Morgan le Fay (who in the poem gives Bertilak his magic powers in the hope that he will destroy Arthur's court) is now good, because the court *deserves* to be destroyed. When the opera's Gawain returns to the Round Table, he loudly proclaims that he is no hero, rejects Arthur and the court, and so achieves "self-discovery."

One test of an opera and its libretto is to imagine how the effect of performance might change if the words were nonsense syllables. With *Gawain* the answer is, Not very much. A great deal of Harsent's libretto is simply lost in the jungle of intense dissonance. The orchestral texture of the music does alter from time to time, but the quality and timbre of the dissonance does not. (In a BBC interview, Elgar Howarth, who conducted *Gawain*, unwarily quoted Birtwistle as admitting: "Oh, well, it's all one chord.") Unlike the work of, say, Alban Berg, which is also dissonant but attractive, the level of intensity is almost completely uniform throughout. The experience is rather like listening to a chorus screech in desperation, severally and together, for three hours.

The program notes make it clear that the audience is expected to concern itself with Birtwistle the man, and his peculiar concern with Time, repetition, etc. He deploys this in vari-

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ous ways: for example, by delayed entrances. When the Green Knight is about to enter, the door of the set opens and there is no one there. He appears at the door's second opening, which gives Birtwistle a chance to indulge in some score repetition. About three-quarters of an hour of the first act is loaded with a numbingly repetitive spectacle of passing Time, i.e., a year represented by various aspects of medieval iconography set out on concentric revolving stages. There is a lugubrious grim reaper who passes slowly, very slowly before our eyes—several times. There are other bits and pieces, all circling around a central platform where Gawain is being armored—also slowly, very slowly, while the orchestra howls and screeches and screams and wails and the chorus chants solemnly in Latin.

I have no objection to dissonant scores as such. The reason why so much of (for instance) Alban Berg or Michael Tippett sounds satisfying and so much of Birtwistle sounds *voulu* and irritating is simple enough. Berg and Tippett sing to their listeners, whereas Birtwistle (if one is to believe the program notes) sings abstract patterns to himself and allows his fans to listen.

At the end of this very long evening I recalled an incident that took place at a John Cage concert. Cage came onto the platform with a briefcase from which he extracted a large fish. He placed the fish inside the piano, on the strings, then sat down and began to play, more or less. A friend of mine stood up in the middle of the auditorium and began to make his way along the row to leave, with as much noise and stepping on as many toes as possible. Someone hissed, "For God's sake, give the man a *chance*!" My friend turned and said loudly, "If you don't know when you're being insulted, you deserve everything you get."

I did not deserve *Gawain*. Neither did the orchestra, nor those in the audience who had the common sense to wonder when it would end, if ever. □

DELECTATIONS

La Dolce Vita in the Snow

LINDA BRIDGES

THERE'S hardly such a thing as an ugly mountain, but some are more beautiful than others, and high among the "some" is the ring of peaks surrounding the ski resort of Cortina d'Ampezzo, a hundred miles north of Venice. These mountains are not only beautiful but witty. Like the rocks of our Bryce Canyon, they are dolomitic limestone—pink and orange, not grey, and with the softer bits easily eroded, leaving fantastic towers and crenelations. The north end of town is bounded by the slabs of the Cristallo group, looking like an improbably dramatic painted backdrop. Turn your back on the Cristallo and you're facing the fanciful spires of Croda da Lago and Becco di Mezzodi, perched on top of a snow-covered plateau. On your left is the handsome but more conventional Sorapis, but around to the right are the Tofana mountains, three massive peaks that look translucent in the late afternoon sun. No wonder the Cortinesi seem contented with their lot.

But even in near-paradise there are disappointments and disagreements. While the Italian jetset is enough in evidence to warrant an article on Cortina in *Town and Country* from time to time, the international jetset hasn't accorded it the same notice as Gstaad or St. Moritz or Courchevel. The local authorities reportedly hope that a repeat visit of the winter Olympics (held in Cortina in 1956) would put the town on more people's mental map; but so far they have failed to get the nod. And even granted the success of Albertville, I may not be the only one who wonders if an invasion of the hordes needed for a modern made-for-television Olympics wouldn't damage the texture of this lovely place.

Certainly there are Cortinesi who think unrestricted development would do so. A comparison between Cortina and the mess that has been made of Chamonix is Exhibit Number 1 in the case for restraint. A few years ago a remarkable little document turned up at the front desks of Cortina hotels. Most of it was the standard tourist information—maps, advertisements for shops and restaurants—but one fold contained an essay on the long tradition of common holding of grazing and forest lands. Counterarguments could be made, but it was a compelling answer to outsiders who had been complaining about the difficulty of getting permission to build there.

But this needn't trouble anyone coming for a week's vacation. The skiers, of course, will head straight for the slopes—but so will a high proportion of non-skiers. Many of Cortina's mountain restaurants (*rifugii*) are accessible to non-skiers, either from the road or via cablecars and chairlifts. Favorites include Duca d'Aosta, under the Pomedes rocks; Scoiattoli, up at Cinque Torri; and Rio Gere, below the formidable Staunies run—but there are a dozen others scattered among the different ski areas. Most of them have outdoor tables and lounge chairs, and in fine weather these are occupied by ladies (and a few older men) who are content to regard skiing as a spectator sport. One gets used to seeing people sunbathing in fur coats.

A favorite venue for the sunbathing mammas is El Camineto (The Fireplace). On a sunny day they drive up early and stake out tables for their families, who will join them for lunch. (Skiers not accompanied by a mamma can drop by or phone to reserve.) The food is served formally by white-jacketed waiters, who also look out for their customers in other ways. If the sun is really hot (and at 5,000 feet the temperature can go quite high without ruining the snow), El Camineto is prepared: it has enough straw hats to go around. On the other hand, if it's snowing hard, the numbers both of mammas and of skiers drop sharply, and the restaurant can afford to detail an underwaiter to look after the lunchers' clothing. He takes your sodden hat, gloves, and jacket and drapes them over the firescreen, turning them to make sure they dry evenly.

But let's hope it's sunny and not too hot, because there are few pleasures at once so sybaritic and so innocent as sitting in the sun, surrounded by snow, watching the follies and triumphs of skiers across the way, and eating risotto with chicken livers or ravioli alla carbonara, followed if you like (second courses are not obligatory) by a smoked pork chop or—a local spe-

Miss Bridges is NR*'s Managing Editor.*

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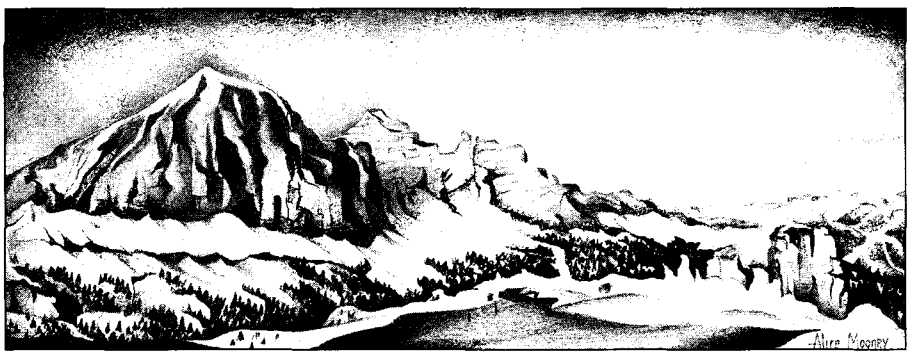
cialty—grilled sausages with polenta.

But the snow beckons, and so it's back across the street for a warm-up run at Rumerlo, and then up to Labirinti or Canaloni or Olimpionica. Olimpionica was the trail used for the men's downhill race in the 1956 Olympics, but it satisfies all sorts and conditions, from the Class 3 skier who makes his way down it in an hour or so by stem turn and sideslip (to be sure, skipping the top, steep part where the trail goes between a daunting pair of rocks), to the good skier who does it in six to ten minutes, to the downhill racer who does it in something under two minutes.



Alice Mooney

The most prominent downhiller in local eyes is Kristian Ghedina, who grew up a stone's throw away from Olimpionica and won two World Cup races on it in the 1989–90 season. He was not in top form at Albertville, having had a bad car accident last summer, but gold medalist Alberto Tomba, though not a native son, also learned to ski on these slopes. Might he have been, a dozen years ago, one of the little show-offs you would see clowning around, riding the poma lift backward, and then taking off at high speed after their *maestro*, practicing their racing tucks? (Less likely that he was one of the two boys—probably members of the church choir—discussing, twenty feet apart on the poma lift, whether Guido d'Arezzo was more important as a monk or a musician.)

After the lifts close there are plenty of shops to wander around—the inevitable assortment of international ones, from Benetton to Mario Valentino, but also plenty of local ones, some very pricey, some not, selling sweaters, boots, local crafts, Tyrolean wear, and a staggering (per capita) quantity of antique jewelry and fine art. Many of these shops, especially the more practical ones, have names you come to recognize as those of the highly ramified leading families—Ghedina again, Lacedelli, Menardi, Majon—many of them the same names that crop up on the list of instructors at the ski school, who, when not turning out racers like Tomba and Ghedina, are carefully and cheerfully turning timid beginners into real skiers, and real skiers into those skis-together beauties who swoop gracefully down the steepest slopes. Beautiful skiing is prized here but sometimes disdained by visitors as incompatible with nerve and speed. That that isn't so is demonstrated whenever one of the locals comes through the (unofficial) chute from Ra Valles down to Pomedes and does a series of perfect turns through the unbroken snow.

If some of those names don't sound very Italian, that's because they're not. Once during a break in class (another typical Cortina touch: *rifugii* on the beginners' slopes have a serving window arranged so that you can get a cup of coffee or a glass of wine without ever removing your skis), a Roman woman made some remark about "us Italians." The *maestro*, smiling but firm, corrected her: "I'm not Italian, I'm Ampezzano." Nor, although Ampezzo was once owned by Austria, is it part of the German-speaking Tyrol, with all that area's tensions. It has its own language, Ladino, not a dialect of Italian but independently derived from Latin and, like Romansh in Switzerland, spoken as a native language by some of the mountain folk and kept up by educated Ampezzani who want to preserve the old traditions.

After shopping you might stop in one of the crowded bars for a coffee and pastry or a beer; or perhaps go to the Hotel de la Poste's cozy (and expensive) wood-paneled bar for a drink or a pot of tea. And then it's time to go back to your hotel and get ready for dinner. If I were writing for *Gourmet* or the *Dollar-Wise Guide* I would have sampled a number of hotels over the years; since I'm not, I can stay happily at the place I picked out of Michelin on my first visit, the Hotel Capannina. The chef-proprietor, Antonio Piovesan, started out at the Locanda Cipriani on Torcello after the war. Some thirty years ago he and his wife moved to Cortina and started a restaurant, later adding the hotel. It is a comfortable, friendly place to stay and handsomely decorated—dark wood against white walls, gorgeous Audubon prints—but a major attraction is, not surprisingly, Tony Piovesan's food. Dinner might start with taglierini gratinata or a simple (though surprising in winter) tomato and basil sauce for penne or farfalle, and one night a week you can count on risotto alla Tony, with diced zucchini, peppers, and other vegetables, for which everyone is expected to be in the dining room at 8 P.M. sharp. Then he might offer saltimbocca or poached trout with mayonnaise or a perfectly grilled chicken, and for dessert strudel or creme caramel or (again, one night a week) custard-filled crepes.

And then the next morning, as the sun pokes its head over the shoulder of Faloria, the delectable question is posed, Where shall we ski—and lunch—today? □

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Clarence Thomas—Confronting the Future: Selections from the Senate Confirmation Hearings and Prior Speeches (Regnery Gateway, 154 pp., $7.95)

ANITA HILL now has celebrity and the deep-pocket patronage of the many interest groups that set out to "Bork" Clarence Thomas. The Senate has refused to question its staff, so the leaker will not be punished. The greatest injustice of the Hill affair, however, is that it has masked the true Justice Thomas. In the television mini-series set off by the unprovable allegations against him, he was forced to play an essentially passive role—a man who had won against poverty and segregation, suddenly helpless again. This book allows us to rediscover the true Mr. Thomas, and to examine the Judiciary Committee's dog-and-pony show at our leisure. Gordon Crovitz's introduction places the controversy squarely in the con-

(Continues on page 53)

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TRANS-O-GRAM / Kem Putney

1 R	2 A	■	3 J	4 X	■	5 K	6 O	7 T	8 C	■	9 B	10 M	■	11 G	12 A	13 R	14 I	15 L	16 Q	■	17 E
18 P	19 X	20 C	21 K	22 S	■	23 W	24 R	■	25 D	26 H	27 N	28 T	29 A	30 I	31 O	32 G	33 X	■	34 H	35 P	■
36 J	37 L	38 Q	39 M	■	40 E	41 C	■	42 R	43 U	44 H	45 O	■	46 D	47 T	48 S	49 K	■	50 A	51 F	52 R	53 L
54 X	■	55 F	56 H	57 E	58 B	59 I	60 M	61 R	62 W	63 J	■	64 D	65 O	66 B	■	67 Q	68 U	■	69 T	70 K	71 E
■	72 V	73 F	74 L	75 C	76 P	77 S	78 G	79 D	■	80 C	81 E	82 R	83 V	84 M	85 K	86 P	87 A	88 T	89 B	■	90 O
91 U	■	92 B	93 R	94 H	95 K	■	96 I	97 N	98 X	99 T	100Q	101F	102O	■	103M	104W	105E	106S	■	107G	108A
109X	110H	■	111C	112I	113A	114O	■	115V	116M	117L	118F	119J	120B	■	121I	122D	123F	124T	125J	126Q	127C
128U	129M	130R	131P	■	132W	133K	134R	135C	136G	137D	138J	■	139Q	140G	■	141T	142S	143O	■	144D	145H
146E	147K	148P	149I	150G	151B	■	152U	153N	■	154V	155W	■	156J	157U	158L	■	159N	160A	161X	162V	■
163R	164W	165P	166A	167X	■	168X	169R	■	170Q	171E	172F	173M	174C	175J	176P	■	177A	178K	179O	180I	181B
182C	183H	184S	185D	■	186F	187J	188I	189A	190L	191T	192M	193Q	194G	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

DEFINITIONS

A. USSR's Vietnam? 160 2 113 12 29 166 108 87 50 177

B. Uninterested 120 58 151 9 92 66 181 89 189

C. Garnet, in January 80 174 75 135 111 182 8 41 20 127

D. Hide away 25 185 46 144 64 79 122 137

E. Oxidized area of Northern U.S.? 71 81 57 40 105 171 146 17

F. Last name in sub-machine guns 172 123 118 73 55 186 51 101

G. Jeweler's display area 194 136 32 107 11 78 140 150

H. Fool 110 145 56 26 34 183 94 44

I. Causing movement or trouble 121 149 112 30 188 59 180 14 96

J. Airline with direction 175 119 138 187 36 3 125 63 156

K. Educational aim 95 133 70 5 147 85 178 21 49

L. Yesteryear's nerd 158 53 15 117 74 37 190

M. Organ transplant problem 192 129 103 39 116 173 60 10 84

N. River of Yorkshire 153 27 159 97

O. Freddy Krueger's milieu 65 31 102 114 90 179 6 143 45

P. Great time for conservatism 148 76 176 18 131 165 35 86

Q. Full of discord 193 100 38 139 170 67 126 16

R. D.C. landmark (2 words) 52 169 93 134 130 82 163 13 42 1 61 24

S. Universe 77 184 106 48 142 22

T. Attachment 191 141 69 88 28 99 124 47 7

U. Questionable apostle 152 157 91 128 43 68

V. Thoughts 83 154 162 72 115

W. Buckeye 155 164 23 104 132 62

X. Portion of each day 33 168 167 54 98 109 19 161 4

DIRECTIONS

The object of TRANS-O-GRAM is to fill in the puzzle diagram by guessing the words from their definitions, and transferring each letter of the guessed word to the correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. When the diagram is filled in it will spell out a quotation from some published work (reading normally from left to right, black boxes indicating the ends of words); also, when the words have all been filled in above, their initial letters will spell out the author and title of the quoted work. The acrostic feature, and the relative word-lengths in the diagram, will assist in the solution. Spelling and definitions on the authority of *Webster's New International Dictionary*, Second Edition. **See page 52 for solution to last Trans-O-Gram.**

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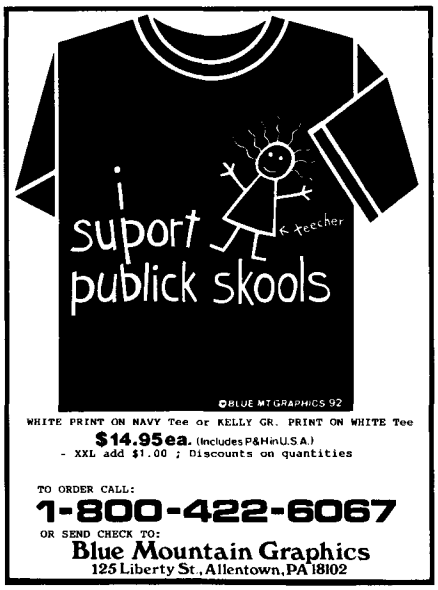
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BOOKS IN BRIEF

(Continued from page 50)

text of 1) the Left's attempts to keep a hold on the Supreme Court by violating every civil liberty and procedural nicety a liberal Court is said to protect and 2) the tremendous strain, on the nominee and his family, of confirmation by character assassination. The selection of text is unabashedly pro-Thomas, leaving out Miss Hill's smears and the maunderings of Susan Hoerchner et al., but including speeches made on the Senate floor, Thomas's pre-lynching statement to the committee, and his inspirational 1985 Savannah State College commencement address. The testimony of the pro-Thomas witnesses looks even stronger in the light of such subsequent revelations as Miss Hill's profession of liberalism, and print corrects some first impressions: J. C. Alvarez, who on TV seemed to speak forever, is quite crisp in print. John Doggett, conversely, seems as self-interested as ever. —Mark Cunningham

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Chasing Buchanan

NEW YORK, MARCH 1

Given that politics is substantially a spectator sport, the turn in the Bush–Buchanan contest yields sheer delight. One has to feel sorry for the Bush researchers. Obviously they have all but earned a PhD in Buchananiana, and what do they go on to do? They publicize a batch of excerpts from Buchanan's columns which bring to mind that he is a marvelously witty fellow, whatever his shortcomings. Imagine that Westbrook Pegler had entered a primary against Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1944, and that the Brain Trust of FDR had combed the writings of Pegler to establish his disqualifications for office. Oh Geordie, jingling Geordie!—what a spectacle that would have been.

We have to begin by understanding that there is no prospect of Buchanan's upsetting Bush for the nomination, and that therefore he enjoys the luxury of any "candidate" whose designs are for something other than victory. Nobody who, like us folks, opines regularly on issues about which people feel deeply can hope to amass a majority of delegates. And, of course, Pat Buchanan has exposed himself to charges that in some directions, with respect to some people, he is basely oriented. On this point serious students of the political scene await reassurance. But meanwhile, what does the Bush brigade come up with?

The *New York Times* chose to kick off its chrestomathy of objectionable Buchanan quotes with the following: "The way to deal with Duke is the way the GOP dealt with the far more formidable challenge of George Wallace. Take a hard look at Duke's portfolio of winning issues; and expropriate those not in conflict with GOP principles."

The only way to lose a vote by circulating that quote is to find a voter who turns white at any use of the name "Duke" other than in a sentence denouncing him. To be sure, there are such. But there are also voters who will read that passage, take off their glasses, and say, "What's wrong with that?"

Let's try Buchanan's lurking misogyny: "Less equipped psychologically to 'stay the course' in the brawling arenas of business, commerce, industry, and the professions, women are physically unequipped to compete in the worlds of athletics and arms."

That's a half truth, but the generality that a woman's nature is distinct, is correct, and it is unlikely that many women voters will cavil at the point being made. They should, on the contrary, be proud of some of those differences. About the full-time feminists, Mr. Buchanan is ungentle, calling them "harridans" who wield the "castrator's knife." That charge is or isn't exaggerated depending on who springs to mind when you talk about feminists. There are differences between Clare Boothe Luce and Germaine Greer, both feminists.

Those who expect to find indictments only of left-of-center types will be mystified by this: "What have the vulture capitalists of the leveraged buyout left us, but an endless pile of clippings from *Women's Wear Daily* of their grinning selves and painted women?" That line could have been written by Jimmy Breslin or John Kenneth Galbraith, or any of the Democratic candidates with a good ghostwriter.

And then, on the subject of politics and passion? "Missing in the torpor of this politics of consensus is belief, conviction, passion. The day of JFK and Barry Goldwater, of Gene McCarthy and Ronald Reagan, the great partisans, seems over. But this is not the end of ideology; it is a phony peace until new men arrive to give voice and direction to the passions of the age."

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On the other hand, the politics of entertainment rules out serious politics. Someone who wishes to regroup the Republican Party around his own leadership just doesn't talk about disagreeing with Vice President Dan Quayle as running the risk of "child abuse." If he goes on to criticize other Republican conservatives—for instance, Gingrich, Kemp, Gramm—Pat Buchanan will alienate critical figures for the grand realignment. Ronald Reagan did not win in 1980 by manhandling Republican leaders in 1976. He ran on the Eleventh Commandment, which forswears criticism of people as distinguished from policies. But Buchanan's way makes for high times: on the way to Lent. □

Batten Down The Hatches

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 28

The prospect of the long fight ahead between President Bush and the Congress on the economy–tax package is discouraging to anybody who wants actually to weigh the economic consequences of the provisions (gimmicks?) being debated. If you have a Lotus 1-2-3 in front of you and somebody from the OMB on the other end of the telephone line, that might help; though not much, given that the OMB was about 100 per cent off a year ago in its forecasts. And anyway, you would be entitled to survey the debate with a veteran's skepticism. —Are you over 18? Okay, what would be your comment on the following description (*USA Today*) of the impact of the Democratic plan: "Raises about $14 billion more in tax hikes than spent on tax cuts, with the excess going to deficit reduction." If you believe that, sorry, you're a minor. Bring your I.D. next time.

Mr. Bush's plan is a farrago of thises and thats, better oriented than the Democratic plan but hopelessly lacking in intellectual or even ideological vertebrae. It has 11 provisions. If it had one more, and the 12th read, "No federal money will be paid in the next ten years to Richard Darman nor shall he exercise any executive authority, nor shall he be permitted within five miles of the White House or Capitol Hill for five years," it would stand a better chance of passage.

But we will have now a series of votes, of vetoes, of threats, the Democrats trying to make the point that Mr. Bush favors the rich, Mr. Bush trying to make the point that if the Democrats are serious about economic recovery, they had

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better stop worrying about the rich and concentrate on how they got rich.

There is lots and lots of boob-bait in the Democratic package, my favorite the provision that companies would no longer be permitted to deduct as a business expense any salary paid to a company official in excess of $1 million. Now I happen to belong to the Order of the Paleolithic Sons of Capitalism, a venerable organization founded in 1776 and open to anyone with an economic IQ higher than 100. Nothing makes us Paleos more angry than those pirates who manipulate the board of directors into paying them tens of millions of dollars in a year in which their companies lose money. But punishing them by breaking a philosophical mold is simply to forswear thinking. If XYZ Inc.'s directors vote to pay President Screwup $10 million in salary notwithstanding that XYZ Inc. lost $500 million last year, there are exactly two relevant parties to the fiasco, the stockholders and the directors. The stockholders can vote out the directors, or sell their shares and go to a better-run company. The single unintelligent thing to say is that old Screwup's salary is other than a business expense. To invite the United States Government to become the arbiter of appropriate compensation in private companies is so loony one can only suppose that the idea originated with Ralph Nader or Jerry Brown.

But the Democrats, with the exception of Paul Tsongas (who, to quote Richard Nixon, is too sensible to get nominated), are on an anti-rich frenzy. Do you know, by the way, who is "rich"? The specifications of richness are not often enunciated by the candidates, because it's more fun to conjure up visions of Carnegies and Vanderbilts and Fords and Rockefellers. But here is how it works. The median household income is $29,000 plus, let's call it $30,000. Any family with less than one-half that income is "poor." Any family with twice that income is "rich." Mr. and Mrs. Jones, whose joint income is $61,000, and who are paying a mortgage on a house and sending three children through college, will be surprised to know that they are rich.

The Democratic tax bill calls for increasing taxation on the rich, and the rate for someone earning a million dollars will be 38 per cent. If you count in state and local taxes, the tax begins to nudge up against the 50 per cent tax from which we were saved by voodoo economics during the Eighties. Only four years ago, Michael Dukakis, running for President, opposed any tax higher than 30 per cent. Only Jesse Jackson called for higher taxes, and the Democratic professionals closed their eyes and held their ears when he said it. He proposed a tax of 38 per cent.

Whatever the deficiencies in the package of George Bush, Republicans are obliged to ask themselves, What would we do without a Republican in the White House to veto all that nonsense? □

Will Our Professors Show Us the Way?

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 26

If anybody running for President has talked about crime, the media must not have been listening. Yet crime is the most grievous problem facing the United States. Consider the following figures for New Haven, Connecticut:

In 1960 the city reported 6 murders, 4 rapes, 16 robberies, 72 aggravated assaults, 567 burglaries, 475 auto thefts.

In 1970, the city reported 10 murders, 42 rapes, 164 robberies, 341 aggravated assaults, 3,783 burglaries, 2,223 auto thefts.

In 1990, the city reported 31 murders, 168 rapes, 1,784 robberies, 2,008 aggravated assaults, 4,476 burglaries, 3,459 auto thefts.

Yale students have been spectacular victims of New Haven crime, and the university is highly mobilized on the question, reports Jennifer Kaylin in the current issue of the university's alumni magazine. "Among the recent security measures are a mandatory security orientation program for freshmen; a round-the-clock campus shuttle-bus service; . . . and more than 100 exterior emergency telephones . . . Over the past two years the campus force has grown from 50 patrol officers to 66 . . ."

Well, that's a start. But, Yale being a formidable brain-center, we should, really, expect more, should we not? President Benno Schmidt of Yale has said that he has "no higher priority" than the safety of the Yale community. And what is he going to do at a national level? He will lobby for an "absolutely rigorous and effective form of handgun control." Gee. Stricter than New York City's laws? There are four murders by guns on an average day in New York. Stricter than Washington, D.C.'s? That city has the highest murder rate in the country, and there they shoot Presidents also.

What wisdom are they distilling at Yale, to help us to confront the problem of crime effectively? Joshua Wallack, a junior who works for a number of social-service projects in the city, says he "choose[s] to view this problem as a call to Yale students to get more involved in the community." Roger Vann, who is described as a "community activist" who works with inner-city youths, tells us that "New Haven and Yale co-exist right next to each other, but they are isolated. That's the core of the problem."

Well, but weren't they just as "isolated" in 1960, when crime was running at about 15 per cent of the current rate? There were then, and there are now, civic enterprises engaged in by Yale students. But such activity is necessarily limited: one does not attend Yale University in order to engage in New Haven life.

Yet there are those who argue, to quote Miss Kaylin, "that crime on the campus won't truly be eradicated until Yale spends more of its resources tackling the root causes of crime such as drugs, poverty, homelessness, and unemployment." And University Secretary Sheila Wellington advises us that her next project, after installing an electronically controlled access system, will be to "tackle the periphery" by helping the neighborhoods surrounding Yale ameliorate their social problems.

Per-capita income in New Haven is low, but it is higher than it was in 1960. What is it that is starkly different? Drugs. What would be the situation in New Haven if drugs were purchasable other than at gunpoint? "One autumn night as he was walking back to his Dwight Street apartment, [fourth-year graduate student David] Blocher was grabbed by a man and dragged into an alley. His attacker pretended to have a knife and flew into a rage when he realized Blocher didn't have any money. He brutally beat Blocher and stole his leather jacket." They arrested that guy. A drug addict.

A year ago the national press picked up the story of Christian Prince, 19, found dead in front of St. Mary's Church on Hillhouse Street, one block from President Schmidt's residence. A 16-year-old will be tried for his murder. In the months during the investigation of the Prince murder, the 16-year-old appeared in court seven times.

We will all cheer when joblessness and homelessness and drug abuse and the impulse to steal are ghosts of times past. But pending the Great Lobotomy on the human race, our academics should tell us how to deter people who wish to kill, or rape, or steal our automobiles. What happens to you, when you get caught stealing a car in New Haven? □

(Universal Press Syndicate)

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Them's My Sentiments

WHAT do you run on, America? Well, as "Rocket" Morton of Captain Beefheart's Magic Band used to say, we run on beans. We run on laser beans. The laser beans of sentiment keep our nation's psychic thrusters powered. In the absence of an established church, sentimentality is the nearest thing we have to a national religion—one which even provides us with a de facto Test Act if we would but use it. To wit: any candidate for political office who adheres to the national faith should be instantly disqualified. That would rid us of Bill Clinton and George Bush at a stroke.

Because I go to a lot of movies, I am perhaps more aware of the place of sentimentality in our national life than most people. In the current hit *Fried Green Tomatoes*, for example, it fairly drips from the celluloid and gums up the projector. Such films are designed to make us "feel good about ourselves," which is to say they invite self-congratulation. Our sensibilities, we are assured, have been properly arranged because we hate the wife-beating Ku Klux Klansman (we might feel out of sorts sometimes but we would never go *that* far) and we love the gutsy restaurateuses who kill him.

Such feelings don't cost us anything. Sentiment by its nature is cheap. We may indulge ourselves in it to our hearts' content and then forget it when the movie is over. In ordinary people, sentimentality is funny or revolting, like the Mother/Daughter Beauty Pageant in which the contestants are invited to "express their feelings for each other" on national television. In the great, however, it is a terrifying vice, characteristic of fools—like Shakespeare's King Lear, whose inability to distinguish between love and sentiment leads to disastrous misjudgments—or tyrants. Caligula was sentimental about his horse, Hitler about his dogs.

In short, sentimentality is feeling divorced from action. It is the first cousin of hypocrisy. But where the hypocrite deceives others, the sentimentalist also deceives himself with worthy feelings that he is unable or unwilling to act on. Both Clinton and Bush are by this definition rank sentimentalists. They have the right feelings but somehow they have never learned that claiming credit for them without doing anything about them is itself discreditable.

Look at Clinton's now-famous letter to Colonel Holmes. What stands out is the emphasis on feelings. He attempts to win the colonel's sympathy by telling him that the latter's "saving me from the draft" came at a time "when I was as low as I have ever been"; he writes that "the anguish and loss of my self-regard and self-confidence" that came from accepting the draft deferment led to compulsive eating and loss of sleep. Finally, he says that he had written a letter requesting to be drafted and then didn't send it. Did he expect to get partial credit for having some decent impulses which he never did anything about?

If after 22 years he were ashamed of his youthful sentimentalism it would be something, but his refusal to apologize for it now suggests that he still believes his "anguish" over the war makes up for his actual behavior in it. George Bush, by contrast, has grown into sentimentality. When he claimed that his management of the economy would produce thirty million new jobs, it was clear that he had no plan of action actually to bring this about. When he announced his intention to be "the education President," he meant that he was going to say—very loudly—that he cared a lot about education but that he was going to leave it to others to figure out how to do anything about it.

Is it any wonder that such a man can now say that he "never took the pledge" not to raise taxes? It turns out that "read my lips" was intended far more literally than anyone supposed at the time: the good feelings never proceeded farther from his heart than his lips. In New Hampshire he showed that his campaign strategy was to stress his sympathetic feelings. Repeatedly he assured audiences that if he could leave New Hampshiremen with one message it would be this:

> We care. We care. Privileged as I am to be President, Barbara and I are not isolated from the feelings of people in this state that are hurting. And that I think is an important message. Friends have to know, and I think it's important to the people that are hurting that their President knows and the President cares. And in this case the President is going to do something about it.

Like young Clinton putting the letter in his pocket, Bush shows in his feeble assurance at the end that he knows there *ought* to be some connection between feeling and doing. But it is the feeling that he wishes to take credit for; as for the doing, well, we just have to trust him.

HERE ARE some words to live by: *Never* trust a sentimentalist. If his actions are untrue to his professed feelings, he won't even know that he has betrayed you. Sentimental politicians, however, get away with such betrayals time after time because we are sentimentalists too, with the sentimental patriotism of the Right, or the sentimental "compassion" of the Left, or the sentimental guff about "self-esteem" of the squishy middle. We will deserve what we get if we persist in asking our politicians to show that "we care" without its costing anyone anything.

—JAMES BOWMAN

"Remember now—cool it with the ethnic jokes."

Mr. Bowman is a freelance writer living in Washington, D.C.

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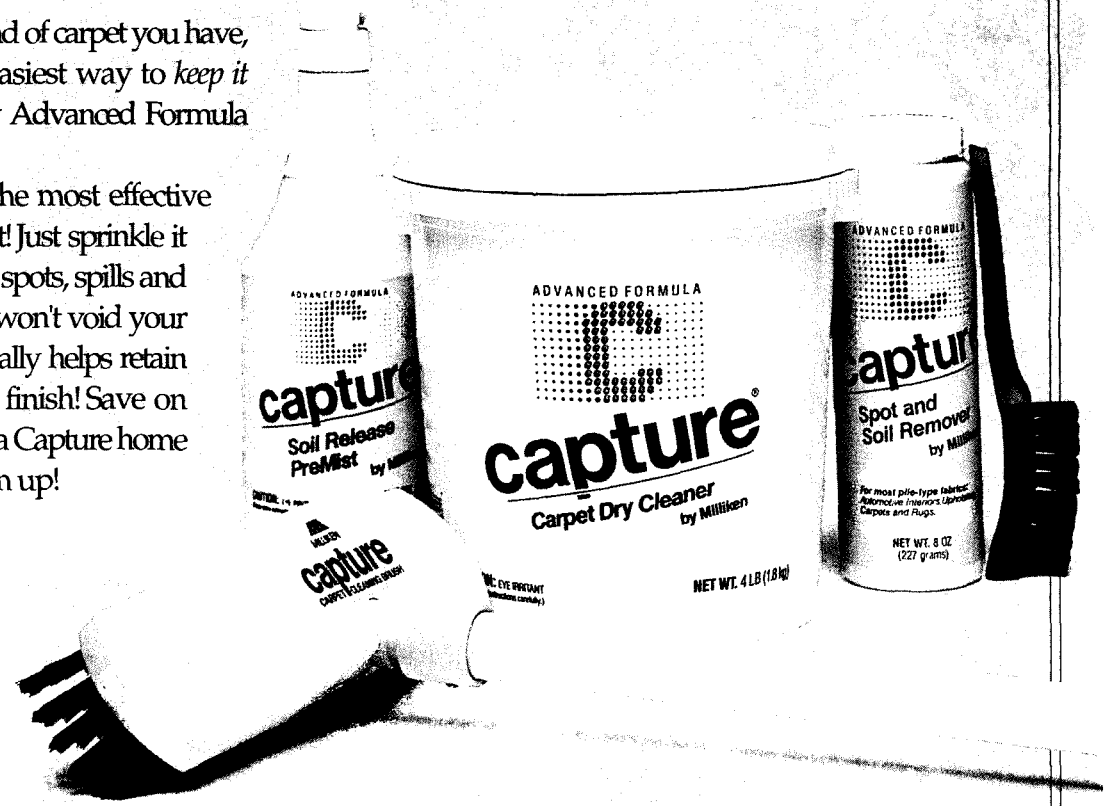

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